

**Adult ESL Literacy:
Relating Theory to Practice
in the Instruction of Mexican Immigrants
in Southern California**

by

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**To my parents and my husband —
all American immigrants**

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Abstract

While much is written about the need for literacy and particularly functional literacy, the terms are rarely clearly defined from a linguistic perspective. This dissertation develops a concept of literacy consisting of graphological literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness. These three aspects are considered with reference to the US adult educational mandates of Americanization and empowerment.

Theory is related to practice through the development of educational objectives for English as a Second Language [ESL] instruction with reference to the literacy needs (particularly writing skills) of intermediate level ESL adult students, primarily Mexican immigrants to Southern California. These ESL students, who may be seen as representative of other immigrants from developing nations to technologically advanced societies, often have limited first language [L1] and second language [L2] literacy, but develop fairly high L2 oral communicative competence. The research considers the students' L1 literacy levels and uses, which of these can be transferred to L2, and what must be taught in L2. Furthermore how students' higher L2 verbal skills interrelate with and can be exploited in the attainment of L2 literacy at all three levels is discussed.

The extent to which theory has been realized in practice (and practice has been informed by theory) is analyzed with reference to an experimental adult ESL literacy course taught to young adult Mexican immigrants in Santa Barbara, California. The final evaluation reviews the basic premises and the extent to which these have been substantiated, followed by implications of the project and possible areas for future research.

Table of Contents

Preface	9
Chapter 1: ESL Literacy: Its Nature and Purpose	11
1.1 The context of literacy	11
1.2 A rationale and basis for providing adult ESL literacy instruction	18
1.3 The literacy activities of young adult Mexican immigrants	19
1.4 Applicable knowledge and skills of the ESL students	21
1.5 Samples of student writing as indicators of literacy	22
1.5.1 Writing sample #1: An English dictation	23
1.5.2 Writing sample #2: A business letter written in English	26
1.5.3 Writing sample #3: An essay written in Spanish	30
1.6 Conclusion	34
Chapter 2: Graphological Literacy	37
2.1 Introduction	37
2.2 English orthography	37
2.3 Can English orthography be taught?	41
2.4 A rationale for teaching ESL graphological literacy	44
2.5 Beyond sounds and spellings	49
2.6 Conclusion	52
Chapter 3: Functional Literacy	54
3.1 Introduction	54
3.2 The scope and importance of functional literacy	54
3.3 The content and types of functional literacy texts	58
3.4 The context of literacy	65
3.5 A rationale for teaching functional literacy	67
3.6 Conclusion	70
Chapter 4: The Literacy of Thoughtfulness	72
4.1 Introduction	72
4.2 The scope and importance of the literacy of thoughtfulness	72
4.3 Critical thinking and critical language awareness	76
4.4 Creative thinking	82
4.5 The ethical dimension	85

4.6	A rationale for teaching the literacy of thoughtfulness	88
4.7	Conclusion	88
Chapter 5: Context of the Research Project: Opportunities and Constraints		
	Constraints	89
5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	Federal mandates: Americanization and/or empowerment	90
5.3	Local mandates: Academic literacy and life skills	98
5.4	The open-entry open-exit curriculum: Advantages and constraints	103
5.5	Conclusion	107
Chapter 6: Research Paradigm and the Design of an Experimental Adult ESL Literacy Course		
	ESL Literacy Course	110
6.1	Introduction	110
6.2	The teacher as researcher	111
6.3	A theoretical basis for a syllabus framework	115
6.4	Recycling concepts: An innovative approach to syllabus design	119
6.5	Evaluation through use of student portfolios	126
6.6	Conclusion	132
Chapter 7: The Research Project: Experimental Adult ESL Literacy Course		
	Course	134
7.1	Introduction	134
7.2	Research utilizing portfolios analysis in the open-entry open-exit setting ..	134
7.3	Initial L1/L2 literacy evaluation of participants	136
7.4	The evolution of literacy lesson design	139
7.5	Portfolio analysis of literacy lessons	145
	7.5.1 Writing assignments about the student, his family, and literacy ...	146
	7.5.2 Writing assignments from a unit on law and society	152
7.6	Portfolio analysis of student course evaluations	161
7.7	Summative portfolio evaluation	163
7.8	Conclusion	165
Chapter 8: Summary and Discussion		
	Summary and Discussion	167
8.1	Literacy from the perspectives of theory and practice	167
8.2	Conclusions utilizing portfolio analysis	171
8.3	Limitations of research in an open-entry open-exit setting	176
8.4	Implications for educators and researchers	180
8.5	Areas for further research — <i>research dilemmas</i>	191

8.6 End note	194
Appendix for Chapter 2	196
2.1 Computer analysis of grapheme-phoneme correspondences	196
2.2 Contrastive analysis of consonants and vowels in Spanish and English ...	198
2.3 English spelling patterns	200
2.4 Spanish-English cognates	202
2.5 Halliday's categories of English punctuation	203
2.6 Teacher's spelling test	204
Appendix for Chapter 5	206
5.1 Comparison of the two adult education ESL programs in Santa Barbara ..	206
Appendix for Chapter 6	207
6.1 Spelling instruction	207
6.2 Grammar components of syllabus	209
6.3 Irregular verb test	211
Appendix for Chapter 7	212
7.1 Adult Education ESL written English class placement test	212
7.2 Comparison of enrollment questionnaires of Ismael and Ignacio	213
7.3 Ignacio's creative writing take-off on grammar lesson	219
7.4 Dating and marriage	221
7.6 'What are you really like?' questionnaire	222
7.7 Literacy uses questionnaires	224
7.8 1992 US Presidential election questionnaire	225
7.9 Ismael's thank you letter	226
7.10 Student class evaluation questionnaire	227
7.11 TOEFL TWE scoring guide	230
Bibliography	231

Preface

The purpose of this dissertation is to work out a theoretical rationale for an approach to literacy teaching and to demonstrate how it might be put into practice. My interest in adult ESL literacy developed in Santa Barbara, when I was hired as a part-time teacher in an adult education ESL program in the fall of 1988. The program had quadrupled enrollment that term due to the literacy requirement of the United States Immigration Reform and Control Act [IRCA], which gave amnesty to 3.2 million undocumented aliens, 1.8 million of whom lived in California. As local adult education programs in the United States are autonomous and as the Santa Barbara Adult Education ESL department had advisory guidelines but no prescribed syllabus or required textbook, teachers developed their own syllabus on the basis of whatever (often limited) professional training they had.¹

My intermediate level ESL students were mainly young adult male Mexican workers, both amnesty recipients and undocumented [illegal] aliens. Most had adequate English oral communicative competence, held down jobs requiring a certain command of spoken English, and could converse with me on a variety of topics. But these same students had great difficulty writing English, much more so than any other students I had taught — non-native English speakers [NNS] who ranged from English as a Foreign Language [EFL] students connected with an University of California intensive language program to ESL students who had completed secondary school and were now at the community [tertiary] college, as well as American native speaking [NS] seven year old primary school pupils.

Although the adult education ESL students could understand what I was saying, basic skills such as spelling and writing in complete sentences came incredibly slowly. During a lesson on filling out employment applications I discovered that some of my adult students had less formal education than the children I had previously taught. I became more and more interested in the concept of adult ESL literacy, with special reference to this type of student.

These young adults needed to learn English as rapidly as possible for daily use. Furthermore the amnesty students would only qualify for citizenship if they could demonstrate a minimal command of English (both oral and written) and a basic understanding of American history and civics. Combining knowledge from my previous teaching experience with suggestions from more experienced teachers and ideas taken from ESL textbooks (most of which assumed much higher literacy than my students had), I worked to devise a way to teach these students English with a focus on literacy. What I desired, however, was also some rationale for what I was doing — a theoretical construct upon which my teaching could be based.

As a research student at the Institute of Education I was challenged by Widdowson's description of 'teaching as a self-conscious inquiring enterprise whereby classroom activities are referred to theoretical principles of one sort or another' (Widdowson 1989: 1). While I had (often through trial and error) developed a way of teaching these Mexican adult ESL students, I wanted to reflect upon how ideas in theory could illuminate and lead to a critical perspective on my own practice. Could a theoretical/practical model relevant to the students I had taught (and would return to teach after my leave of absence) be formulated?

The following inquiry into the nature of literacy and its implications for curriculum and syllabus development is of significance not only for my teaching, but may be useful for other ESL educators as well. Many technologically advanced countries are confronted with immigrants with limited L1 and/or L2 literacy, for wherever there is economic disparity between a highly technological nation and a less developed country, migration will occur. Not only do such migrants have to learn L2, but they are also often confronted with more extensive literacy needs and uses in the receiving country than they encountered at home. While most American immigrants find menial employment without a command of English, I posit that there are compelling reasons within the American society for teaching adults ESL such as: employers favor workers with a command of spoken (and often written) English, educators know school pupils progress more satisfactorily if parents are also literate in English, and two undercurrents in American adult education have always been assimilation (or Americanization) and empowerment through mastery of the English language.

Notes:

As an American I have decided to use American spelling throughout. In instances where different words are used in the two countries I have used the American one but provided the British equivalent in brackets in the first instance of use.

On the matter of controversial pronominals, I have avoided them by plurality or by use of neutral terms such as *the individual*. Rather than a random distribution of *he*, *she*, and so on, for the sake of clarity in all teaching contexts the teacher is designated as feminine and the students as masculine (as was generally the case in this project).

Chapter 1: ESL Literacy:

Its Nature and Purpose

1.1. The Context of Literacy

Literacy does not have the same uses in all societies as is clear from the work done by those who have examined language uses in social context (Cook-Gumperz 1986, Levine 1986). While different socio-economic and/or ethnic groups all living in one area might have very different literacy practices (Heath 1983), immigrants are faced with an array of L2 literacy uses and needs in their new homeland. Whether one views the United States as a melting pot, a salad, or a bouillabaisse, in countries formed by an immigrant population — such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand — immigrants with limited ESL skills may initially find support within their community, but learning English has always been a key to integration and advancement. Although it will be shown that Mexicans (like some of the South Carolina Blacks described by Heath [1983]), can survive with limited English literacy, in the late twentieth century a lack of literacy leads to some degree of disenfranchisement from the socio-economic fabric of the community at large. As Rockhill argues, 'the construction of literacy is embedded in the discursive practices and power relations of everyday life — it is socially constructed, materially produced, morally regulated and carries a symbolic significance which cannot be captured by its reduction to any one of these' (1993: 171).

Within an immigrant community the literacy needs and uses of different members of the same socio-economic and ethnic group may vary depending upon immigration status (legal or undocumented), a person's gender, with whom an individual lives, and a person's role within that context (García and Durán 1991, Guerra 1991, and Rockhill 1993). Even among individuals of similar age living within an immigrant community, individuals of the same sex may assume distinct roles requiring different amounts of literacy (Weinstein-Shr 1993).

Therefore, the teacher/researcher must consider her students' L1 literacy uses and needs, why they immigrated, and the ways in which they might or actually do use ESL literacy in the community, at home, and in the workplace:

What is important to note at this point is that there is no true definition of literacy. Rather, each definition must be defined for the purpose to which it is to be put, and its correctness may be judged only in terms of how well it serves that purpose. (Bormuth 1975, quoted by Graff 1987: 373)

Any analysis of L1 and L2 literacy must be contextualized into the social and cultural experiences of the particular group and the characteristics of the community into which the individuals immigrate (Guerra 1991).

The primary reason why Mexicans emigrate to the United States is economic disparity. From the vantage of literacy, a relationship between education, economic development, and emigration can be posited. Although claims and counterclaims have been made as to the strength and direction of relationship between education and economic development (World Bank 1980), there are no poor countries with high literacy rates (Galbraith 1994: 180-84). The influence of the relationship between education and economic opportunities can also be seen among the target adult ESL students. They have limited Spanish literacy and lower L1 literacy uses and needs in their rural Mexican communities than they need in L2 (English) in a highly technological country such as the United States. Consequently, ESL literacy becomes a major factor for the Mexican immigrant in terms of his integration into or disenfranchisement from the host community in socio-cultural and economic terms.

There are three main reasons for immigration throughout the world in the late twentieth century: economic disparity, political instability, and persecution. The most important along the 1,945 mile US-Mexican border — between a less developed country and a technologically advanced nation — is economic disparity (Wambaugh 1984:13). Low Mexican salaries and high unemployment rates, reasonably well paid US job opportunities for unskilled laborers, and geographical proximity have led to considerable labor migration. In California alone there are some 1.8 million amnesty recipients under IRCA and approximately 2-3 million more undocumented Mexican migrants. As the majority of these individuals are young adult males,² they constitute a significant percentage of the work force in a state with a total population of 32 million.

Mexican immigrants are self-selected, as has been the case with European and Asian immigrants. However, the Mexicans, in contrast with other immigrant groups, do not always come with the intention of settling permanently. The pool of short term immigrants is determined by the Mexican economy, whereas longer employment is determined by the need for low-skilled workers in the United States (Castañeda 1988: 319). It is difficult for Mexicans to obtain legal permanent resident status, but many undocumented aliens who get married and start families may stay on for years not only because they may be making almost ten times as much as they would be in Mexico, but also because of the better educational opportunities for their children.

Most of these Mexican migrants have not been the poorest or the richest, but sons of small landholders or *ejiditarios*. While they represent a lower socio-economic group with lower L1 literacy than most other US immigrants in the twentieth century, these Mexicans have human capital characteristics that are superior to those of the general population of their home country, as is also the case with the majority of migrants world-wide (Papademetriou 1991: 273). Intellectual ability and motivation are both characteristics which can be evidenced by present literacy (given appropriate opportunities), but which can also be vital factors in future literacy acquisition, be it in L1 or L2.

The literacy uses and needs of the Mexican immigrant population can be considered in terms of L1 and L2. While little research has been published on this population (and particularly on those who are undocumented), a literacy profile developed through classroom research (Chapters 6 and 7) indicates that most of the students had very low L1 literacy backgrounds. They came from rural areas of Mexico,³ where there was very little print in the ambient environment and restricted literacy needs within the limited bureaucratic infrastructure of what was essentially a cash economy. These students attended small village schools for only a few years (and often intermittently if their help was needed at home). Their resultant limited L1 literacy mirrors world-wide evidence that in developing countries there are often substantial disparities in educational enrollments and per capita government expenditures between rural and urban areas (Wagner 1994: 248). The L1 literacy acquisition of these students has usually also been affected by factors in the family's socio-economic status [SES] (Coleman 1960). The parents tended to have minimal (if any) formal education and literacy skills. In terms of what has been called the family literacy ecology (Wagner 1994), if there were any books in the home they were the family Bible and Catholic Missal, both of which were rarely, if ever, read. This brief overview indicates that such young adults have often had limited Spanish literacy uses and needs in the rural areas of that developing society.

A decision to emigrate is usually based upon quite accurate oral information about emigration issues from relatives or friends (Portes 1990: 83). However, there is rarely any linguistic preparation for emigration in terms of learning English. Upon crossing the border (usually illegally),⁴ these young adults find themselves without any command of English in a highly technological society where English literacy is used extensively. It is, therefore, necessary to consider American language policy and use, as well as how this influences the ESL literacy needs of the Mexican immigrant.

Although the United States has no official language, the literate infrastructure is in English. A nation-wide study indicated that 90% of all jobs call for regular uses of literacy and that the majority of occupational materials (manuals, memos, announcements, and directions) were written at a high school level of difficulty or higher (Mikulecky 1990: 26-7). Although employment opportunities will be discussed later, this study indicates the importance of literacy in this highly technological society. The assumption of a basic level of literacy in the society is also indicated by a high school diploma or General Education Diploma [or GED, a high school equivalency diploma which can be obtained through adult basic education] being a prerequisite for obtaining many entry level jobs including employment in government agencies (such as the US Postal Service) and enlistment into the armed forces.

In Santa Barbara, a community of 85,000, almost all the print in the ambient environment is in English: road signs, signs on government building and stores, and so on.⁵ The bureaucratic infrastructure is in English. To use the distinction between prose literacy and document literacy (Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992), it is assumed that everyone

with the community, including immigrants, have minimal document literacy in English. Although an undocumented alien has as little contact with authorities as possible, all government documents such as tax forms, birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, and traffic tickets are printed in English. Rent and utility bills are in English, the assumption being that even if one does not understand all the information on the bill (such as sliding rates for increased consumption), one can determine the correct amount to pay.

However, prose literacy (or reading comprehension and the ability to interpret texts) in English is not assumed. Consequently public agencies, private utilities, and the health sector disseminate any important textual information in both English and Spanish, such as announcements on earthquake preparedness, methods of water conservation, or monitoring results of a tetanus injection. Another indication that a command of English (or even Spanish) literacy is not assumed by the bureaucratic infrastructure is that every agency (such as in law enforcement or health care) has some bilingual employees with whom one can communicate in spoken Spanish if necessary.

The commercial infrastructure uses mainly English for its own transactions and when dealing with the public. Employees in stores and the tourist industry (motels, restaurants, etc.) who interact with the public speak English, although some stores in the barrios [Mexican neighborhoods] have bilingual employees. Signs in stores are almost always in English and most retailers have set prices written next to the goods. Product information on consumer items and processed foods is only in English (with the exception of bilingual information on bulk cleaning supplies, an indication that many janitors are Latino⁶). As most stores are self-service (and packaged goods have pictures on them), purchases can be made without the use of oral or written English.

Turning next to the media, there are both English and Spanish newspapers, television and radio stations.⁷ Some shops (particularly laundromats) have notice boards where private individuals can put up signs. Whether these are in English or Spanish depends upon the designated audience.

The educational infrastructure uses English, which has been designated as the medium of instruction. However, due to the great influx of ESL students, schools with a multilingual population provide ESL instruction, whereas schools with primarily Spanish speaking children provide bilingual education for the first three years of primary school and ESL instruction as needed through the next nine years to the end of secondary school. Depending on the classroom, instruction can be in English, Spanish, or a combination of the two. Textbooks are primarily in English. On the assumption that document processing is easier than prose processing, report cards are in English, but all important school notices are sent home in English and Spanish. Whereas teachers of bilingual and ESL classes are supposed to be proficient in Spanish, children often become translators at parent-teacher conferences and may be the family literacy mediators when a command of written English is required. Free adult basic education (including ESL) is available to all (Chapter 5.2).

Most Mexicans are Catholic and many attend church regularly. Churches may hold services in either Spanish or English services or alternately, depending upon the neighborhood. Whereas the Catholic Church often does not emphasize the parishioner's ability to read the Missal or the Bible, many Protestant denominations (and particularly the more fundamentalist ones) place importance upon the individual's ability to read and interpret the Bible himself — hence literacy can be vital.

The city provides numerous leisure activities. Most of the recreation department activities are conducted in English, but there are Spanish and English-speaking soccer leagues. There is a non-profit Latino community center, which has a variety of activities such as dances and other get-togethers at which both languages are used. Libraries have predominantly English books, but branches in the barrios always have a bilingual librarian on duty and have more bilingual and Spanish reading material. Librarians report a low circulation of books but high circulation of *fotonovelas* [adult comic books] among Mexican readers (Palmer 1994).

The language(s) needed for household literacy needs can be extrapolated from the above. Activities requiring English literacy are often completed by the most able member of a family or communal living group. Those young immigrants who do not live in an extended family tend to reside with other Mexicans their own age. As most undocumented aliens (the bulk of the research population) do not qualify for government services, they have limited, if any, literate interaction with government agencies except to get a driver's license or to deal with traffic tickets; in both cases bilingual assistance is available. Minimal English competency in document processing is needed to pay utility bills and the like. The amount of one's pay check is clear, even if the deductions are not. Most medical and educational information is available in English and Spanish. English prose literacy is primarily needed for reading information on consumer products and packaged items.

This overview indicates that the immigrant can manage at home and within the community with a very limited command of spoken English and minimal proficiency in document processing in English, for oral bilingual assistance is often available and important written information is disseminated throughout the community in English and Spanish.

But what about the workplace? Within the occupational infrastructure of the community, the requisite command of spoken and written English is highly variable. Immigrants traditionally try to find work similar to that which they did in their native country. Until the early twentieth century American immigrants from rural areas tended to homestead on free land. Today agricultural laborers from rural backgrounds tend never to rise above employment as seasonal agricultural workers if they do work similar to that which they did at home. Although field work is available year long, it is low-paid and physically strenuous. Consequently, more enterprising farm workers try to learn some English and to develop connections, which may lead to other kinds of work. Most Mexican immigrants have not had extensive education or specialized technical training, but they

provide a hard-working and motivated work force, willing to work as unskilled laborers (Cornelius 1993: A13).

When immigrants come to an urban area such as Santa Barbara, they often start out as day laborers, waiting on known street corners for prospective employers to drive by and pick them up for a day's work. Most migrants find steady urban employment through the intervention of relatives and friends. In Santa Barbara there are numerous blue collar employment opportunities for unskilled workers with a legal (or fake) Social Security number if they are willing to work for the minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour in businesses related to tourism and the service sector (motels, hotels, restaurants, health care facilities), local light industry (mainly electronic assembly), and the construction industry. Individuals without Social Security cards often find work as domestic workers or gardeners.

Mexicans tend to live with others in a mutually supportive system until they find jobs or if they are temporarily out of work. However, only those who find regular employment ultimately stay, for adult undocumented aliens qualify for no governmental social benefits other than emergency medical care and free ESL education.

The more education and skills an immigrant has, the easier it is for him to find initial employment. Mexicans have a reputation of being good workers and are willing and able to do hard manual labor. Consequently some employers favor hard workers with no command of English over Americans who are less willing and/or proficient at doing menial work. Businesses employing a number of Mexicans usually have a Latino with a greater command of English act as interpreter. Oral communicative competence in English is usually needed for better employment, for employers prefer employees with whom they can communicate directly (rather than through an intermediary) and who have sufficient oral command of English to deal directly with customers. Lack of L2 oral communicative competence may also signal undocumented status to immigration authorities, who occasionally go into barrios and question any *suspected* person on the street. Such officials can ask to see alien registration cards. Since Americans have no identity cards, anyone with no documentation can effectively argue he is legal only if he speaks good English, a sign that he has lived here long enough to be a legal resident or a citizen. The Mayor of Pomona, California, was even singled out for questioning by immigration authorities in 1994.

Most unskilled laborers initially need little workplace literacy beyond the rather predictable information required on job applications, and such document processing can be done elsewhere — often with the help of more literate friends. However, in order to advance in the job market, immigrants usually need to acquire the ability to read and write notes or work orders; they need to understand written instructions on the materials that they use; they must be able to negotiate cash and credit card transactions if working in sales.

Discussions with students as well as their written work provided some indication as to their perception of the relative importance of literacy in their own lives (Chapter 7.4). Limited literacy students were sometimes not even aware of the difference literacy could or did make. Results of one questionnaire on literacy uses indicated that several students had

neither read nor written anything in the preceding week. Their responses may not have been completely accurate, in part because *leer* in Spanish has more the meaning of 'to sit down and read'. The students had, of course, seen signs on streets and in stores, which they could probably read, but to their recollection literacy had not played a part in their lives during the last seven days. Other students noted that they had used some reading and writing and that greater ESL literacy would be to their advantage in the work place, for the literate employee could write out orders from customers, use electronic banking equipment such as credit [charge] cards, and read job orders or work manuals. Minimal English literacy is often assumed even of day laborers such as cleaning ladies and gardeners, who work in people's homes and often arrive after the homeowner has gone to work. The Mexicans have expressed frustration at not being able to read notes that their American employers left for them, especially if the messages were handwritten in cursive.⁸

Personal reading and writing in L1 and/or L2 was also limited. Some students wrote to family members at home, but most preferred phoning — a favored medium of communication when one or both parties have limited literacy. While few students reported reading *fotonovelas* or the Bible (if they were fundamentalist Protestant), hardly anyone read books or newspapers regularly. Finally most students thought they had few literacy skills to transfer from L1 to L2 because of their limited education.

Certain generalizations can be made so far. L1/L2 literacy is obviously a social activity, which as been described in terms of literacy events which an immigrant might encounter in the daily round. Literacy activities are carried out in different ways, depending upon the domain of life — be it the home, the workplace, or in interaction with the bureaucratic infrastructure. An individual's literacy needs may vary depending upon whether he is acting in the role of worker, friend, or family member. However, an immigrant with limited ESL literacy usually develops networks of support, which enable him to accomplish literacy tasks. Although there is no system of paid scribes as in some low-literacy African and Asian communities, Mexicans with limited ESL literacy often complete English literacy tasks with help from friends or native English speakers in voluntary agencies. Finally, the bureaucratic infrastructure of the community is aware of the extensive limited L2 prose literacy in the large immigrant community and, therefore, any text that is important to all residents is printed in both English and Spanish.

It might seem as if the immediate transactional literacy needs of these young Mexican immigrants are not pressing. However, America has a long tradition of holding the concept of universal literacy to be of value not only to each individual, but to the society at large. To see why this is so it is necessary to examine the relevant aspects of American educational policy.

1.2. A Rationale and Basis for Providing Adult ESL Literacy Instruction

The concept of compulsory education was introduced into the American colonies and the value of an educated citizenry has been articulated since the time of the Revolution (Chapter 5.2). The pervasive use of literacy in a highly technological society such as the United States also influences government policies. For example, President Bush and the state governors considered the importance of a literate populace in the late 1980s when establishing a set of national educational goals which would guide the United States into the twenty-first century. One goal was:

By the year 2000, every adult will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (quoted by Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992: 2)

The United States has a high literacy rate, especially in comparison with developing countries, but this goal underscores the assumed relationship between literacy and the skills needed for a highly technological country to be economically viable at home and abroad:

We will not collapse tomorrow from a lack of adequate literacy skills, but we may find that year by year, we continue to fall behind in international competitiveness, and that society becomes more divided between those who are skilled and those who are not. (Venezky et al. 1987: 53)

In spite of the importance of economic development to policy planners, the necessity for literacy is not only conceived of in economic terms.

'The responsibilities of citizenship' refer to those of the individual as a member of a participatory democracy. The concept of rights harkens back to the Declaration of Independence: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and a pursuit of happiness' — a statement usually understood to be an endorsement of the concept of self-development in the broadest sense.

Although certain segments of society, such as women and slaves, were denied educational opportunities in the past, civil rights legislation now guarantees educational opportunities to all — but to all individuals living in the country or to all legal residents?

And who supports publicly funded adult ESL literacy education?

The local business community is dependent upon the immigrant work force and favor workers who have a command of oral and written English. Schools are trying to educate children and understand the difficulties faced by pupils whose parents lack ESL literacy. The bureaucratic infrastructure seeks to provide services to the community in English. As a short-term, stopgap measure some important announcements are distributed in both Spanish and English. Yet such a service is expensive and is not a permanent solution to the information access problem faced by immigrants who will ultimately only be empowered if they achieve some linguistic integration into the English infrastructure of the society.

The American public has grown up with the concept of the *melting pot*, which is dependent upon assimilation of newcomers in socio-economic as well as linguistic terms (Chapter 5.2). Consequently, whether one views English literacy from the vantage of the economic viability of the individual or the state, in terms of the education of its people or from a socio-cultural perspective, Californians (if interviewed) would undoubtedly endorse the concept of universal (including ESL) literacy.

However, high state unemployment (9%) and an unwillingness by many taxpayers to shoulder what they consider to be an intolerable tax burden has led to a certain xenophobia. The federal government is responsible for immigration, so official state appeals have been made to Washington for resources to tighten the California border. Disgruntled citizens decided there were three ways California could decrease the number of illegal residents, whose identification is difficult in a community like Santa Barbara where almost half the inhabitants are Latino and where no one has identity papers. The state could make it difficult to obtain employment (although many realize that the agribusiness as well as the tourist and service industries are dependent upon Mexican workers). The state could deny services and education. And public employees could be required to report *suspected* undocumented aliens. In 1994 the California voters passed Proposition 187 in an attempt to curb immigration.⁹

Consequently Santa Barbara is in an anomalous situation. A law has been passed to deny undocumented aliens free public access at all levels of education, but a legal injunction will hold up implementation for at least two years. Therefore, the community will continue to offer its extensive ESL program with no set syllabus to some 1,700 immigrants. These students can manage at some level from day to day with little or no ESL literacy, but they come voluntarily to classes for which a contested law says most of them are ineligible. On the basis of insights provided in Chapter 1.2, how does an intermediate ESL teacher decide what to teach?

1.3. Literacy Activities of Young Adult Mexican Immigrants

The literacy activities that the Mexican immigrant encounters can be considered in terms of genre, for there is a relation between the social purpose of a text and the language structure (Cope and Kalantzis 1993: 2). In studies of literacy levels of young American adults two primary categories have been established: document and prose literacy (Venezky et al. 1987, Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992, Kirsch et al. 1992).¹⁰ Since printed materials are not used in a vacuum, they can be considered in terms of six contexts of use:

- * **work:** occupations, finding employment, finance, and being on the job
- * **consumer economics:** credit and banking, advertising, making purchases, and maintaining personal possessions.
- * **community and citizenship:** community resources and becoming or staying informed.

- * **home and family:** interpersonal relationships, personal finance, housing, and insurance.
- * **health and safety:** drugs and alcohol, disease prevention and treatment, safety and accident prevention, first aid, emergencies, and staying healthy.
- * **leisure and recreation:** travel, recreational activities, and restaurants (Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992: 20).

While the validity and usefulness of this method of classification needs further analysis (Chapter 3), the list provides a useful point of departure. The literacy activities the Mexican immigrant encounters involve much more document than prose literacy. Therefore, one important aspect of being literate in a technologically advanced society is possessing the knowledge and skills needed to process information found in documents (Kirsch and Mosenthal 1990). Document literacy tasks involve understanding the formatting that occurs in such genre where information is presented in a different way than in a prose text (Chapter 3). Successful performance of document processing tasks such as filling out applications or order forms involves the ability to read and then provide the requisite information. Research has shown that adults spend more time reading documents than any other type of material (Guthrie et al. 1986), which mirrors information presented in Chapter 1.2. Document processing can involve a number of different tasks, for the reader needs to locate and understand information given and/or requested.

For example, the recipient of a phone bill would have to understand the amount he needed to pay as well as the final date of payment after which a late charge would be levied and/or service would be cut off. The ability to read and comprehend information indicating that the applicable rate for a long distance call is dependent upon when the call is made can enable an individual to consider if there might be ways to lower his phone bill.¹¹ Different rates may apply if the customer has selected special services, such as the payment of a set long distance charge, which decreases the cost of each call and thus leads to an overall saving for heavy users. While paying a monthly phone bill might at first appear to be a simply functional literacy task involving a certain amount of document processing, any text can be read not only in terms of the information given and/or requested, but also considered in terms of its implications and possible alternative actions.

Most of the prose texts an adult encounters consist of expository writing. These materials include texts from pamphlets, brochures, newspapers, and magazines (Kirsch et al. 1992: 16). While the sentence is the basic unit of prose, the reader is assisted by an understanding of structural or organizational features such as section or paragraph headings, fonts, and type faces. Texts can be read simply to locate information, but at another level information can be compared and contrasted in a process of critical analysis. The reader can also go beyond the text and draw upon his background knowledge of the topic or make text-based inferences. While in Southern California the bureaucratic infrastructure provides most important texts in Spanish and English, it may be important for the Mexican immigrant to go beyond a simple decoding of a text and an understanding

of factual information given to an analysis involving some critical language awareness.

Of course, not all texts are expository, as the category of leisure and recreation suggests. Individuals may write personal letters. They may read for leisure — probably more fiction than non-fiction. However any text can invite thoughtful consideration rather than simple factual understanding.

Most young adult Mexican immigrants (along with their American counterparts) read more than they write, are more receptive than productive in terms of literacy. Productive texts mainly involve document processing, although occasionally a note or a business letter will have to be written. Most literacy tasks are quite functional in nature, but there is an aspect to literacy which goes beyond the ability to deal with factual information. It can be appropriate and/or necessary to consider the meaning and implications of texts, as well as possible alternative approaches to the text itself or the subject at hand.

In summary, adult education literacy ESL students have very different educational needs from other adult learners or from NS children with emergent literacy. An analysis of possible contexts of use indicates that the specific literacy tasks which most immigrant (and NS) adults encounter in the daily round require more receptive than productive abilities. While these literacy tasks can be conceived of simply in functional terms, it has been suggested that critical analysis and/or creative thinking can often also be utilized if one moves beyond a superficial consideration of the parameters of common literacy tasks.

1.4. Applicable Knowledge and Skills of the ESL Students

The knowledge and skills which the adult education ESL student brings to the learning situation must be considered in conjunction with whether approaches used to teach other groups of students might be appropriate for the target population. The limited L1/L2 formal education and concomitant restricted literacy of the adult education ESL student differentiate him from the ESL or EFL student in academic institutions. Students in postgraduate courses have literacy backgrounds similar to the educated in the host country, and such ESL/EFL university students are familiar with an academic (and usually highly literate) approach to learning English for academic purposes.

In contrast, the adult education ESL student does not need English for academic purposes, but he does need English oral communicative competence and literacy for the various domains of use he encounters in the daily round. Therefore, these two groups of young NNS adults learners require different approaches in methodology as well as content.

Adult education ESL students are also distinct from the limited literacy NS American adults, who had the opportunity to go to school but failed to achieve a higher level of literacy because of learning and/or developmental disabilities or because the existent educational opportunities did not meet their needs, as in the case of urban dropouts. These NS young adults are of great concern to government policy makers, for it has been

estimated that 60% to 70% of NS prison inmates and welfare recipients may not read, write, or compute well enough to get and keep a job (Brizius and Foster 1987: vii).

The approach needed to reach the NS low literacy adults, who previously failed to develop an adequate level of literacy for cognitive and/or socio-economic reasons, is different from that needed by the motivated immigrants who want to develop L2 oral communicative competence and literacy, but also need a greater understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context of the host country. The almost universal employment of young Mexican immigrants with limited English literacy also raises the question whether literacy is a dependent or independent variable, for obviously employment is possible for the highly motivated individual with a certain level of intelligence and the willingness to work hard at whatever job.

Finally, the adult ESL student with adequate oral communicative competence could be compared with the NS child beginning school, for both can say more than they can read and/or write. However, the adult ESL student, who can usually read at a limited level in Spanish, understands how written language represents speech and understands the very regular Spanish phoneme-grapheme relationships. Thus he has some understanding of the basics of literacy and has specific L1 decoding skills, which can be transferred to^α L2 situation if differences between the two writing systems are understood. Furthermore, whereas schools understandably focus upon academic literacy skills, adult education ESL teachers must consider the range of literacy activities an immigrant encounters in the daily round and how he might best be prepared to accomplish these.

The Mexican adult education ESL student has been shown to have a literacy background, present literacy uses and needs, as well as opportunities for learning that are different from those of adult academic ESL/EFL students, low literacy NS young adults, and NS children. The target population, therefore, warrants an approach designed specifically to meet its needs. Within this general framework some specific pieces of student writing will now be analyzed to identify any L1 and/or L2 literacy skills which can be built upon as well as areas which must be addressed in ESL instruction. The textual analysis will also help provide parameters for a possible conceptual construct of literacy in line with government policy.

1.5. Samples of Student Writing as Indicators of Literacy

The ESL teacher needs to consider not only what she would like her students to learn, but also what L1 and/or L2 skills they have which can be built upon. Although individuals read more than they write, rather than analyzing students' reading ability through transcription of audio tapes, the focus here and throughout this research will be upon what can be gleaned from actual examples of student writing. While the ESL student may have low L2 literacy, he has literacy skills which can be built upon. He understands at least in some limited way the concept of written text. He knows how phonemes are

encoded into graphemes to form written words in Spanish — knowledge which can be utilized in the development of English literacy if differences between phoneme-grapheme relationships in Spanish and English are understood.

In terms of orality, the young Mexican adults in the research project were placed at the intermediate level which means that they have some English oral communicative competence, even if their English literacy is very limited. Orality and literacy are not completely separate entities but lie upon a continuum. Since not only formal learning, but also actual literacy tasks in the society often involve some combination of spoken and written language, it will be important to consider how students' higher ESL oral communicative competence not only affects, but can be called upon in the teaching of ESL literacy.

Three samples of student work will now be analyzed: an English dictation, a business letter in English, and an essay written in Spanish. The dictation will indicate a student's rudimentary ability to operate the graphological system of English in terms of forming the alphabet letters and writing the words he hears. The student's oral comprehension may be evidenced by the extent to which he appears to have understood what he wrote.

The second sample is a business letter written in English. While research indicates that in the daily round people read more than they write and that they encounter more document than prose text (Chapter 1.3), an example of student prose will not only further substantiate conclusions reached with regard to the graphological system of English, but will also indicate the student's productive capacities in terms of a functional literacy text.

The third sample consists of an essay written in Spanish. As a limited command of L2, be it spoken or written, is a constraint, an essay in L1 will provide a means moving beyond transactional use and enable self-expression. The Spanish essay will also give an indication of the level of a student's L1 literacy, what skills could be transferred to L2, and what would have to be learned in classroom instruction.

1.5.1. Writing Sample #1: An English Dictation

A student wrote the following upon hearing for the first time the dictation of a poem, a *Jazz Chant* by Carolyn Graham (1979: 9):

Saly spik spanich
but nut berry wel
went she tray to speck spanich
you realy quen tel
wat languich she's speken
or train to speck.
the fours tam I gor her
I dokt it was grik.

This text illustrates rudimentary aspects of written language. The student was able to form the letters of the alphabet more or less according to the norm of his native country. He understood the principle of spelling and wrote every word. These were grouped with prompting from the teacher to form the lines of the poem.

Viewing the selection as a whole, the student wrote those consonants correctly which have the same phoneme-grapheme correspondence in English and Spanish (particularly if one is not too fussy about precise pronunciation, as, for example, with the ways speakers of different languages pronounce *r*). Errors occurred with *berry* instead of *very*, as spoken Spanish does not clearly distinguish between *v* and *b*. He used the Spanish *qu* for *c* and *g* for *h*. He guessed at the spelling of English phonemes (and particularly consonant digraphs) with no Spanish equivalents, writing *spanich* = *Spanish*, *wat* = *what*, *langich* = *language*, and *dokt* = *thought*. Silent second consonants needed after short vowel sounds were missing as in *Saly*, *wel*, *tel*. Final consonants which Mexicans often fail to pronounce when speaking English were missing such as the final *s* in third person singular present tense verbs (*spik* = *speaks*, *tray* = *tries*), the *g* at the end of the present continuous (*speken* = *speaking*, *train* = *trying*) and other final consonants (*quen* = *can't*, *fours* = *first*, *gor* = *heard*).

An analysis of the dictation shows the student spelled some vowels according to standard English spelling. However, the phoneme-grapheme relationship of vowels presents two problems. First of all, phonemes are written using different graphemes in English. Secondly, although in Spanish vowels can only be written in one way, in English a vowel grapheme can be pronounced in a number of ways, depending upon the root of the

word and its relationship to other letters in the word. This student had some command of the written form of short vowel sounds, missing only *nut* for *not*. The long vowel sounds for E and I presented difficulty. While he wrote the long E in *she* and *realy* correctly, he wrote *spek* or *spik* = *speak* and *grik* = *Greek*. With the long I he used the Spanish phoneme-grapheme equivalents with *tray* = *try* and *train* = *trying* and erroneously *tam* = *time*. The student did not know how to write vowel sounds affected by *r* as in *fors* = *first* and *gor* = *heard*.

Rereading the student sample with these corrections in mind, one would get:

Sally speaks Spanish, but not very well.

When she tries to speak Spanish,

you really can't tell

what language she's speaking

or trying to speak.

The first time I heard her,

I thought it was Greek!

The grammatical constructions are correct, which is more often the case in dictations than in texts students generate themselves. If an ESL student does not understand the dictation at all, he is more apt to make not only spelling errors of graphemes, but also mistakes which reflect his lack of comprehension. This student had good oral communicative competence, could understand almost all spoken communication in class, and could carry on quite sophisticated discussions on a variety of topics. But on the basis of this writing sample could he be considered literate?

He had mechanical skill to form the letters of the alphabet. If this were extended to the ability to read words within a sentence or also to write them, as in a dictation, this student could do that, although most words were misspelled. The aspect of written ESL evidenced by this dictation constitutes what I shall call graphological literacy. This includes not only the ability to write and spell words correctly, but also includes a knowledge of how to use words in complete sentences, demarcated with appropriate punctuation. Although people often speak in phrases, the written norm is the complete sentence beginning with a capital and ending with a period [full stop]. Furthermore, graphological literacy includes a further ability to format larger chunks of text into paragraphs.

Within these parameters of graphological literacy, a number of issues must be considered in greater detail in Chapter Two. First of all, to what extent is the visual form important and should the ESL student be taught to form letters of the alphabet according to the American norm when this differs significantly from the Mexican one, as with the small *a*, *f*, and *r*? Secondly, does English spelling have enough regularities for phonics principles to be taught and, if a text can be read even if words are misspelled, why is standard spelling important? Thirdly, what is the importance of punctuation within a sentence and of standard ways of structuring written text — such as the division of the discourse into paragraphs? Is demanding conformity in regard to these aspects of graphological literacy

more negative in the sense of giving in to the hegemony of the dominant culture or more positive in the sense of providing access to mainstream America?

In conclusion, this writing sample indicates that while this student had limited mechanical ability to put words onto paper in acceptable form, he lacked graphological literacy. However, even if he had these skills, would it be enough? It will be posited that the ability to form letters and spell words enables an individual to operate the graphological system of a language. While this is a necessary aspect of literacy, it alone is not sufficient.

1.5.2. Writing Sample #2: A Business Letter Written in English

Taking dictation simply involves writing down what an individual has heard, but one usually writes in order to convey some information, generating one's own text in the process. A common longer piece of literacy text that most adults must write from time to time is the business letter. Therefore, as an indication of student writing, consider the following letter written by an adult Mexican ESL student to the secondary school principal [headmaster], who allows the city's adult education program to use his facility for evening classes. Since the assignment stressed not only the content to be conveyed in the body of the letter, but also the form, the class discussed the formatting of a business letter and each student was given a copy of the model letter. The body of the sample letter was intentionally incomplete, as the object of the exercise was for the students to generate their own text. The model was:

	<i>your address</i>	433 East Pedregosa Street
	<i>the date</i>	Santa Barbara, CA 93103
		May 18, 1992
Mr. Hernandez		
Santa Barbara High School		
700 East Anapamu	<i>inside address</i>	
Santa Barbara, CA 93101		
Dear Mr. Hernandez,	<i>greeting</i>	
Thank you very much for letting us use your classroom for our ESL at night.		
	<i>closing</i>	Sincerely yours,
	<i>signature</i>	Monica Jones

Using this letter as a guide, one student wrote the following letter:

Humberto
1517 CASTILLO ST
Santa Barbara Ca 93103
January 12/93

Mr Andrew Hernandez
Santa Barbara High School
700 East Arroyo Pkwy
Santa Barbara Ca 93101

Thank you Mr Hernandez for
OPEN THE doors to all the PEOPLE
who's interested to COM night school
is A good opportunity for THOUS
PEOPLE who HAVE SPENT TIME
I Thank you ONE MORE TIME

Thank you very much
Mr Hernandez

The student's letter does look something like a business letter, but it also indicates what difficulty limited literacy ESL students have in quickly scanning a model, even if they have it right before them rather than having to refer to an image cast by an overhead projector or copying from the board. Humberto had difficulty transferring elements of the sample letter, which he had on a piece of paper before him, to his own text. On his second try, which is what is reproduced, Humberto places his address in the upper right according to the American norm, but he also put his name at the top, which was either an indication that he knew the Mexican literacy convention of placing the writer's name at the top or he thought that as in any written class work, he should write his name at the top. As in the dictation sample, this student had no grasp of punctuation. In fact, the only period he used was between *Castillo* and *St*, suggesting that he didn't understand that *St.* would indicate that the word had been abbreviated. Even when he was directly copying, he made errors, so that *hig* is written without the final *h*. He also wrote the second zip code [pin code] incorrectly. The zip code error might also indicate that he knew his own, but did not understand that in a town the size of Santa Barbara all zip codes will begin with the same first three numbers, so that the number could never be 43101. The salutation was missing completely.

In the text itself, there are no paragraphs and no punctuation. Essentially, the student is writing down what he would say, not realizing that inflection and pauses are indicated by punctuation. Some graphological difficulties were resolved because help was given with spelling by the teacher and other classmates.¹² While the text is quite understandable, obvious deficiencies are present.

Instead of using the gerund *opening*, the student simply gave *open*, which he might have seen on store signs. *Wo's* is a close phonetic spelling of *whose*, especially since Mexicans usually pronounce *wh* simply as *w*. As with his use of the period, here Humberto used an apostrophe, probably because he knew they exist but he was not sure when to use one. Why is there no preposition after *com*? On first reading, one might think the student was trying to write *wo's interested to com (to) nigh school*. Maybe he left out the preposition before *nigh school* because he knew that *a* is used in Spanish to indicate location, but is often omitted in English in similar grammatical constructions. Or he might have lost his train of thought, in which case if *nigh school* is used a second time, *nigh school is a good opportunity* reads well. If *nigh school* indeed belongs to the first clause, then *is a good aPortunity* probably indicates that he forgot that in English the pronoun must always be given except in the imperative, whereas in Spanish the pronoun need not be articulated if it is understood from the context.

The grammatical construction is actually quite complex with two dependent clauses in *a good aPortunity for thous PeoPle wo Have sPear time. I thank you One More TiMe* reads well, although he repeats this thought again with *than you very much*. Two aspects of this phrase can be related to spoken language. With reference to spelling, the lack of a *k* at the end of *thank* may be a result of Mexican immigrant speech patterns, in which the final

consonants are often dropped, particularly if they are unvoiced. While such imprecision is frequently heard and at some level acceptable in spoken language, the (comparatively recent) standardization of spelling leaves no room for deviation from the norm. In terms of content, one often repeats an idea in spoken language, formulating it slightly differently in order to emphasize a point. The student may also have been thinking of how one would give thanks in Spanish, a language in which gratitude is expressed more effusively than in English. In Spanish it would have been quite appropriate to say *thank you* twice, expressed in different ways.

In a conversation, the discussion of the topic might have ended at this point. Obviously the writer did not understand that if one writes a letter in English, one has to add a closing such as *Sincerely yours* as given in the sample letter, just as one might use *sinceramente* in Mexico. And there is no signature, either because the student thought giving his name at the beginning was sufficient as it would be in a Mexican business letter or because he followed the procedure for all written assignments by writing his name at the top of the page.

Viewing the letter as a whole, the student does have an adequate grasp of the mechanical aspects of the medium, that is to say he has a certain degree of graphological literacy. The writer probably had fairly good oral communicative competence for the grammatical errors, although evident and obvious, do not totally obscure the meaning. His inability to write a business letter, which includes the standard elements, reflects not only a lack of graphological literacy, or inability to use the medium, but also the student's lack of understanding of the mode of written communication, which may well reflect his inexperience with the printed word.

This student did not understand the basic elements of the American business letter and consequently lacked the ability to complete this prose literacy task in English according to the societal norm. This sample also suggests that his capacity to read written English may be sufficient only for simple document processing in English and not for more complex texts in document or prose form. Consequently, this student would probably have difficulty with many literacy tasks frequently encountered in the highly literate and technologically advanced American society.

The classic definition of functional literacy, formulated for UNESCO in 1956 states:

A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group. (Gray 1956: 19)

Such a definition provides the rationale for the practical emphasis of many ESL literacy programs in the United States (and other societies as well) and is also reflected in ESL textbooks, such as the Real Life English series (Jolly and Robinson: 1988). Units based on daily literacy events one might encounter are designed to help students learn how to complete basic tasks involving document and prose literacy.

The earlier analysis of areas of literacy use suggests that a focus upon functional tasks involving prose and document literacy (be they receptive or productive in nature) may be quite relevant to the ESL student. Completion of such productive literacy tasks involves the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the information given and/or requested, as well as a command of basic graphological skills including the ability to form letters of the alphabet and spell words.

However, as literacy events occur within a social context, a student also often needs some schematic knowledge of the topic as well as some understanding of issues related to the specific literacy task. A student can be taught how to fill in the blanks on a check, but doesn't he also need to understand why people even have checking accounts and how to open one if he is an illegal immigrant? A student can be taught how to read the prescription label on a bottle of pills, but doesn't he also need to understand when to seek medical help and where to obtain low cost medical care in a country without a national health system?

These unanswered questions suggest that to consider literacy simply in graphological and functional terms is not enough in as much as people use spoken language in their daily lives to do more than simply negotiate the mundane aspects of existence. In light of this, a third writing sample will be analyzed to discern if there is not yet another aspect of literacy to be incorporated in any comprehensive definition of the term.

1.5.3. Writing Sample #3: An Essay Written in Spanish.

A limited command of L2, be it spoken or written, constrains self-expression. Therefore, the students were given the opportunity to write in L1 in response to the following questions:

Escribe un breve párrafo en español contestando las siguientes preguntas.

¿Cuál era su trabajo antes de salir de su país? Si usted estuviera todavía allí, ¿qué trabajo estaría realizando ahora? ¿Cuál es su trabajo en los Estados Unidos? Explique lo que usted hace. Si tuviera la preparación necesaria, ¿qué trabajo le gustaría estar desempeñando? Respecto a ese trabajo, específicamente, ¿qué cree que estaría usted haciendo?

If you don't speak Spanish, answer the questions in a paragraph in English.

What was your job in your country before you left? If you were still there, what would you be doing now? What is your job in the United States? Explain what you do. If you could have more education or training, what job would you like to have? What specifically do you think you would be doing?

Here is the reply of a student who had three years of education in Mexico. Although he had completed less than the average six years of schooling of students in the project, his

response does indicate strengths and weaknesses seen also in the work of other students participating in the research project.

Bueno la ocupacion que yo tenia
Era a ayudarle a mi hermano
a trabajar yo iba la Escuela
Yo no pude estudiar por
motivos de economia que
nosotros ganabamos por ese
motivo no pude continuar
mis estudio o que ami
me viera gustaba seguir
studiando para ser otro
En este tiempo

CONSENT TO RELEASE FORM: I hereby authorize my teacher, Monica Jones, to use any of my written work for her University of London Ph.D. research project.

Last Name

ISMAEL
First Name

Signature

1-11-93
Date

If one keeps the same line breaks but corrects the spelling, the essay reads:

Student's Spanish Text:

Bueno, la ocupacion que yo tenia
Era a yudarle a mi Ermono
a trabajar yo iba la Escuela
yo No pude estudiar por
motivos de conomia que
Nosotros yehabamos por ese
motivo No pude contiNar
mis Estudio o que ami
me viera gustodo seguir
studiando pora ser otro
En este Tiempo

Student's Text with Standard Spanish Spelling:

Bueno, la ocupación que yo tenía
era ayudarle a mi hermano
a trabajar yo iba a la escuela
yo no pude estudiar por
motivos de economía
nosotros llevábamos por ese
motivo no pude continuar
mis estudios o que a mí
me hubiera gustado seguir
estudiando para ser otro
en este tiempo

Although the student's written Spanish is understandable, it contains numerous deviations from standard written Spanish. Not only are there various spelling and syntactic errors in the one run-on sentence, but the student also simply writes as he would speak. Yet in spite of very apparent difficulties with the written form, the thoughts expressed by this student in his short essay indicate thoughtfulness. The passage could be translated as follows:

Well, the job I had was to help my brother work I went to school I couldn't study for economic reasons we were having for this reason I could not continue my studies or it would have pleased me to continue studying to be different now

The meaning in this Spanish essay is obscured by the student's very elementary grasp of written language. He was able to read the questions and respond. But his answer is written the way people speak, in phrases rather than sentences. Even the beginning word, *Bueno*, which might be appropriate in spoken language, but not in a written answer to a question, indicates the student was writing down his thoughts the way he would speak them. The paralinguistic pauses, audible in speech, are not indicated by punctuation of any kind. The student did know a piece of written discourse (sentence and/or paragraph) begins with a capital letter, but the capital letters interspersed throughout the text suggest that the student did not have an adequate command of how to write and when to use upper and lower case letters. The essay lacks appropriate punctuation. There are no periods to denote sentences and only one comma, which sets off the initial *Bueno*.

Focusing on the spelling, the essay can be understood even though there are occasional misspellings, such as the omission of the initial silent *h* and the use of an *o* instead of an *a* in *ermono* = *hermano*. No diacritical marks are used, although accents are often needed in Spanish to indicate the emphasized syllable or to differentiate between two

words which would otherwise be spelled the same. Other spelling errors reflect confusion with English, as when the student writes *studiando* instead of *estudiando*, omitting the *e*, which is at the beginning of the Spanish form of many cognates such as *español* for *Spanish*, or *estudiar* for *study*. A knowledge of English does come to the student's aid, however, when he writes *motivo*. In Spanish the *b* and the *v* are pronounced almost the same, so ESL students will often use *b* when the word is actually spelled with a *v* in English and/or Spanish. The student has no English cognate to help him write *hubiera* and he makes the mistake of using a *v* and writing *viera*. His spelling error here may be influenced by his local dialect: the *h* is silent anyway and the *u* may not be pronounced very strongly.

The word choice is also very colloquial. The use of *bueno* to start the passage has already been mentioned. *Yehabamos* is probably meant to be *llevábamos*, a word that indicates aspect and tense but no content, a word used more often in spoken than in written discourse. In spoken Mexican Spanish, the pronunciation of the sound for *ll* is close to that for *y*, so that the student writes *yehabamos* instead of *llevábamos*. He also has a weak grasp of grammar and how words are constructed leading him to write *a yudarle*, for *a* as a preposition often occurs in Spanish, but what he was trying to write was the very common word for *help* — *ayudar*. There is also no agreement between the plural possessive adjective *mis* and the singular noun *estudio*, either because the student forgot to write an *s* on the end of *estudio* or because in some dialects of spoken Mexican Spanish there is often an omission of the final *s*.

The analysis indicates that the student has quite limited Spanish literacy, but his thoughts are quite sophisticated. This suggests that it is not only unfair to equate low literacy with low intelligence, but it is also pedagogically unfair not to challenge people intellectually even if they have limited literacy.

The writing sample also indicates the limitation of defining literacy simply in graphological and functional terms, for language is not just available for transactional use, but is an individual's basic means of self-expression. If language is used to conceptualize thought, then literacy must have an aspect beyond simply the ability to accomplish the every day literacy tasks faced by an individual in the daily round of home and community:

What would happen if the whole world became literate? Answer: not so very much, for the world is by and large structured in such a way that it is capable of absorbing the impact. But if the whole world consisted of literate, autonomous, critical, constructive people, capable of translating ideas into action, individually or collectively — the world would change.
(Galtung 1976: 93)

This quotation encapsulates a third aspect of literacy, which shall be called *the literacy of thoughtfulness*. This ability to use literacy as a basis for critical and creative thought will be discussed in Chapter Four. Although critical language awareness and *explication de texte* have always been considered important for the more educated, it is posited that the literacy

of thoughtfulness is a salient aspect of any multifaceted definition of literacy and should not be denied the less literate.

An individual can be thoughtful without being literate. But the literacy of thoughtfulness can enable students to become more perceptive not only in how they view the written word, but also in how they use written language to help make decisions and resolve problems — events which inevitably occur in the life of any adult. To deny the existence (and consequently instruction) of the literacy of thoughtfulness is in a sense to deny that language is used to articulate thought and that written language can be used to express thoughts, concepts, and ideas which extend beyond the functional necessity for written discourse in the daily round. All adults think and make decisions on matters affecting their own lives; in literate societies the written word can play an important part in this process. Most people read and give thoughtful consideration to more texts than they write themselves. Since the literacy of thoughtfulness involves more receptive than productive uses of language, a teacher could focus upon reading to the exclusion of writing. However, instruction in the literacy of thoughtfulness can utilize a student's greater oral communicative competence in conjunction with emergent literacy in lessons which ultimately encourage critical and creative thinking, as well as self-expression.

Finally, in addition to the three aspects of literacy discussed so far, from a historical perspective, provisions for literacy instruction in the United States have historically been based upon two principles — assimilation and empowerment. Assimilation has some nativist underpinnings of *Americanizing* the newcomer to fit in, thus at some level implying the notion of *the melting pot*. However, literacy has also been seen as the key to active involvement in a participatory democracy of independent and critical thinkers. In this sense literacy can be seen as a key to empowerment. Funding for adult education ESL has been based upon the dual mandates of Americanization and empowerment, so that they must be included in any further discussion of literacy. While the two mandates may at first appear to be contradictory, they will be shown to be complementary in many respects.

In summary, the analysis of the three writing samples indicated that literacy is a complex term. Each of the three identified facets — graphological literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness — warrant examination in greater detail.

1.6. Conclusion

Teaching young adult Mexican immigrants who had adequate English oral communicative competence, but limited L1 and even lower L2 literacy, motivated the development of a theoretical construct of ESL literacy. In this chapter, an overview of the context of the literacy project indicated that Santa Barbara has a large Mexican immigrant community consisting of many undocumented aliens who find work and manage in the daily round with little L2 literacy in spite of the dominance of English in the society.

Although the provision of free adult ESL literacy instruction is presently being contested in the courts, the rationale for providing such an educational opportunity has been given. A consideration of possible areas for literacy use suggested that individuals have a greater need for document than prose literacy. They also read more than they write.

On the basis of the analysis of three samples of student work a conception of literacy has been posited which consists of graphological literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness. The next chapter will focus upon the first of these.

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- ¹ It was estimated that in 1988 as many as 90% of the adult ESL students were taught by part-time instructors, 44% of whom had no formal adult ESL training (Gaer 1993: 3).
 - ² Females are discouraged by their families from emigrating due to the physical danger of crossing the border and the societal expectation that a young woman stay at home until she marries.
 - ³ Migration to California is very common in the central Mexican states of Michoacán, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Durango, from which an estimated 70% of the immigrants come (Cross and Sandos 1980: xvi).
 - ⁴ See Chapter 5.2 for a discussion of US immigration policy, which favors the literate with extensive specialized job training and makes it difficult for poor, limited-literacy individuals with minimal job skills to immigrate legally.
 - ⁵ Local ordinances prohibit outdoor advertising (such as billboards), pole signs over 6 feet tall, and neon signs on stores.
 - ⁶ Latino and Hispanic are terms widely used in Southern California to refer to individuals who have come from Spanish-speaking countries (primarily Mexico or Central America) or whose ancestors have.
 - ⁷ Advertising for adult education ESL classes is done exclusively on Spanish radio.
 - ⁸ A Mexican governmental directive halted the instruction of cursive in 1972.
 - ⁹ On November 8, 1994 a voter initiative, Proposition 187, was passed in California by a margin of 59% to 41%. Proposition 187 increases fines for forging documents such as Social Security cards and alien registration cards. It increases fines for employers who hire undocumented workers. The law also prohibits undocumented aliens from receiving public school and higher education, non-emergency public health services (such as immunization, tuberculosis screening, birth control, and prenatal care), public protective services for abused children, and nursing home care for elderly or disabled

individuals. Educators and health care officials are supposed to report any individuals they suspect of illegal immigration status to the Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS]. Law officials must verify immigration status of anyone arrested and also report suspected undocumented aliens. As free and public education is mandated by federal law, injunctions have been filed challenging the constitutionality of some provisions of Proposition 187. Challenged sections of proposition cannot be implemented until the legal issues are resolved.

- ¹⁰ While numeracy is also considered, this is beyond the purview of this dissertation.
- ¹¹ In the United States all long distance calls are listed separately with phone number and the time the call was made.
- ¹² Students with limited graphological literacy often have an inadequate command of the sequence of the alphabet and difficulty in guessing close spellings of words – two skills necessary for the efficient use of dictionaries.

Chapter 2: Graphological Literacy

2.1. Introduction

Bloomfield wrote more than sixty years ago that 'Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks' (1933: 21). Whether one agrees with this definition or not, 'visible marks' are a good way to describe that mechanical aspect of literacy or those skills needed in order to transfer the phonemes one hears into 'marks' or graphemes on the page. Bloomfield's 'visible marks' could also be interpreted to include capitalization, punctuation, and formatting features such as paragraphs, sections, and chapters. A consideration of what those 'visible marks' look like could also incorporate whether the text is handwritten, typed, word processed, or printed. All this constitutes what will be called graphological literacy.

It will be posited that graphological literacy has little value in and of itself, for the ability to read or write a single word such as *cat* only has value when that word is part of a text — or, to use Widdowson's terminology, when the lexical item gains indexical meaning in discourse. However, graphological literacy provides the necessary basis for functional literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness.

The mechanical skills which constitute graphological literacy cannot be taken for granted. Reading and writing are both dependent upon an individual's ability to form and/or recognize letters of the alphabet and understand how they are grouped together to make words. Spanish spelling evidences a close phoneme-grapheme relationship, which is understood even by limited literacy adults such as the Mexican ESL students. However, the systematicity of English spelling must be considered. Views, such as those of Zachrisson, that English spelling is 'antiquated, inconsistent, and illogical' (1930: 10) are now generally discredited. As C. Chomsky observes, 'the relation of conventional English orthography to the sound structure of the language . . . is much closer than ordinarily assumed' (C. Chomsky: 1970: 287). English spelling is now considered to be morphophonemic (Stubbs 1980, Bochner 1993). It will be argued that adult ESL Mexican students have the analytic capability to utilize their basic understanding of the Spanish phoneme-grapheme relationships to gain an understanding of the underlying morphophonemic structure of English. This provides the rationale for phonics and the explicit instruction of spelling.

2.2. English Orthography

Print conveys meaning through a very complex process. Probably the most important single fact about this activity is that the purpose of the reading and/or writing act is inextricably interwoven in its technique so that the ends are an integral part of the means.

However, according to Stubbs (1980: 44), the single most important theoretical problem underlying the practical problem of teaching initial English literacy is understanding how the writing system relates to the spoken language.

All alphabetic writing systems are based upon the principles of phoneme-grapheme correspondences in which there is ideally one letter (or pair or triplet or letters). For example, Spanish approaches this one-to-one phoneme-grapheme relationship quite closely. English correspondences are not so regular, but one computer corpus analysis of 17,000 words indicates that 84% of English words are spelled according to regular patterns (Hanna et al. 1971). Other researchers estimate 75% regularity (Crystal 1987:214). However, the spelling of about 3% of English words is so unpredictable that these must be learned totally by rote (Hanna et al. 1971). Since some 400 of these irregular spellings are among the most frequently used words in the language, this suggests English is more irregular than it actually is.

The apparent irregularities in English spelling can be viewed from a historical perspective. English spelling has evolved over time and is an amalgam of different traditions. In the Anglo-Saxon Period an alphabet of 27 graphemes had to represent nearly 40 phonemes, so that many sounds had to be signaled by combinations of letters. After the Norman Conquest, French scribes and early printers introduced their own conventions and norms. The fifteen century writing system did not keep pace with the sound changes affecting the language and the *Great Vowel Shift* is the main reason for the diversity of vowel spellings. Also some letters sounded in Anglo-Saxon became silent. In the next century it became fashionable to make English spelling reflect Latin or Greek etymology; later many additional loan words entered English from other European languages and retained aspects of their original spelling. While the resultant modern English system is basically phonemic, it has been estimated that there are phonemic alternatives for a grapheme (3.5 sounds per letter) and far more graphemic alternatives for a phoneme (13.7 spellings per sound) (Dewey 1971). Such background information suggests why English spelling is not as regular as that of other languages. Nevertheless, an understanding of the underlying principles of English spelling is basic to the acquisition of literacy.

The major features of English phoneme-grapheme correspondences will be considered, first with reference to consonants, and then to vowels. Most English consonants exhibit a quite direct grapheme-phoneme relationship, if one does not denote more precise allophonic distinctions. Phonemic variations are usually caused by adjoining letters and follow regular patterns. There is greater irregularity in phoneme-grapheme correspondences with vowels, which is unfortunate in so far as vowels are the key to syllable perception. The primary patterns with long and short vowel sounds show a high degree of consistency (Hanna et al. 1971, Appendix 2.1). Other patterns (such as diphthongs and vowel alternations caused by the consonant *r*) occur less frequently but have regular formation. Vowels not only have more phonemic alternatives for a grapheme, but there are often numerous graphemic alternatives of a phoneme, caused in great part by

the historical incorporation of different spelling patterns. However, in spite of possible variations, no English word is ever spelled in such a way as to give no information about its pronunciation. Even an orthographic unit such as *gh* is quite restricted in its possible pronunciation and may be quite unambiguous in certain contexts.

In summary, the overriding principle discussed so far indicates that the spelling of many English words is alphabetic and phonemic. Particularly monosyllabic words (such as *sat*, *set*, *sit*) are regular in the sense that the pronunciation is predictable from the spelling alone, and, conversely, the spelling is predictable from the pronunciation.

However, English spelling is not just a system which relates sound units to letters and it is inadequate if considered in phonemic terms alone. Rather English is morphophonemic, for the orthographic units are not only related to phonemes, but also to morphemes, and thus to grammatical and semantic units:

The complexities of English spelling cannot be accounted for completely on the assumption that the system is phonemic with irregularities. . . . It is necessary to assume that the system is partly phonemic and partly morphemic. (Hockett 1958: 542)

This idea is further developed by N. Chomsky and Halle in The Sound Pattern of English (1968), where they demonstrate that the relationship between conventional English orthography and the sound structure of the language is much closer than is ordinarily assumed. The authors contend that while the conventional spelling of English words does not always correspond to the surface phonetic form which words assume in English, it often corresponds more closely with the underlying abstract level of representation within the sound system of the language.

C. Chomsky (1970) further clarifies this notion of abstract underlying form, showing its place and function within the grammar of English and explaining its relation to spoken language. She contends that the grapheme-phoneme relation of vowels and consonants as discussed so far could be termed *lexical spelling*, for it involves a consideration of pronunciation, phonetic transcription, or the type of broad phonetic transcription often called *phonemic transcription*. While this approach is simple and direct, any attempt to incorporate a spelling system so closely tied to the pronunciation of English immediately becomes problematic when one attempts to incorporate it into the grammar. For example, English words undergo pronunciation shifts when suffixes are added. In the -s endings of the plurals of nouns and of the third person singular present indicative, both grammatical categories retain the graphemic shape of the morpheme -(e)s, despite the existence of the phonemically different allomorphs /-s/, /-z/, /-iz/, which are applied following well-known morphemic rules of English. Similarly the English preterit of regular verbs is indicated by the written suffixal morpheme -ed, although the spoken allomorphs are /-t/, /-d/, /-id/.

However, if in either case one sought phonemically motivated consistency, as has been advocated by some projects on English spelling reform, morphological information would be lost. Would it be better to write *cats*, *dogz*, and *foxez* instead of *cats*, *dogs*, and

foxes — or *bakt*, *raind*, and *wantid* instead of *baked*, *rained*, and *wanted*? Not according to Vachek, who contends:

. . . it is only too obvious that such replacement has to be evaluated as a retrograde step, because it renders the morphological information less clear than in the present, traditional way of writing. (1973:23)

While an individual learning to spell English might be helped by phoneme-grapheme consistency, the more literate individual is aided by the retention of the grammatical categories.

Since English spelling is not merely phonetic but has rules for converting the pronunciation of grammatically related items, it is possible to retain lexical spelling similarities. This is highly desirable for the underlying reality of the language, masked by surface phonetic features, remains visible in spelling.

The lexical spelling thus acquires the character of an abstract representation, from which the actual phonetic realizations are predictable according to general rules of pronunciation. (C. Chomsky 1970: 289)

In the course of oral language acquisition, the native speaker internalizes the rules of its phonological system (C. Chomsky 1970: 290-91). Words that appear to have irregular spelling according to phoneme-grapheme rules are governed by different principles. When suffixes are added to words, vowel shifts occur which are in accordance with spelling rules discussed previously as in *photograph* > *photography*. When suffixes are added, some graphemes that were silent in the root become audible as in *sign* > *signify*. Consonant alternations can also occur as in *critical* > *criticize*.

In addition to vowel and consonant alterations, other surface phonetic variations include stress placement and vowel reduction, which are not reflected in the lexical spelling of words, but operate predictably according to rule. The movement of the stressed syllable in *PHOtograph*, *photoGRAPHic*, and *phoTOGraphy* is not expressed at a lexical level, but is a regular variation seen in similar words such as *TELEgraph*, *teleGRAPHic*, and *teLEGraphy* (N. Chomsky and Halle 1970: 11-12).

Surface phonetic variations are regular within the English language system. While they may obscure similarities between lexical items in spoken language, they are not evidenced in the orthography. Rather, English spelling represents the meaning-bearing item or root directly without irrelevant phonetic detail. In phonetic transcription two words might look different; but words that on the lexical level are the same, look the same. If one knows a language, the differences between *medical* > *medicine* are quite different from *kill* > *sill*, for in the latter case the phonetic change from [k] to [s] creates a new lexical item. But in *medical* > *medicine* there is only a phonetic change, while the lexical item as well as the lexical spelling and orthography remain the same.

Therefore the morphophonemic nature of English spelling allows visual identity to exist between items that mean the same, while words that mean different things can be visually distinguished. The predominantly visual English spelling system assumes that its users have native competence in the phonology and morphology of the language. In this

sense reading is dependent upon knowledge of the language, but the written form is not just a reflection of speech, but in some respects acts as an independent medium with its own characteristics.

In summary, English spelling is mainly phonemic for the phonemes are represented by single letters, as well as spelling patterns. In addition, English spelling retains information about the relationships between words, as evidenced by research into the relationship between spelling and transformational grammar (Luelsdorff 1987, Bochner 1993). Therefore, English orthography can therefore not be seen as a single unified system, for it is based upon several different organizing principles and subsets of rules, which tend to be rather consistent in themselves. English spelling is problematic because one does not know which principles apply to the spelling of a given word. While English orthography is fairly convenient for fluent adult readers, it is not optimal for young NS children learning to read or for ESL/EFL students (Stubbs 1980: 45).

2.3. Can English Orthography Be Taught?

On both sides of the Atlantic ongoing research is being done into how children learn to read and write, as well as on what the best pedagogical methods might be. However, review articles of recent significant research in ESOL instruction in reading and writing (Grabe 1989, 1991; Péry-Woodley 1991; Raimes 1991) make virtually no mention of basic graphological literacy or the acquisition of English orthography. The authors of the above articles might claim that they were focusing on higher literacy ESL/EFL students, for whom the mechanical aspects of literacy are not as problematic as for the target population of Mexican immigrants.

However, since the acquisition of English orthography by these ESL students is fundamental to their mastery of the mechanics of graphological literacy, a fundamental question must be raised: 'Can English spelling be taught?' There are three possible answers: It cannot be, because English spelling is too irregular. It could be, but no explicit instruction is necessary for people will learn at their own pace through exposure to the printed word. Or it should be, because an explicit awareness of the morphophonemic structure allows for a conscious acquisition of spelling. As each of these positions has pedagogical implications, the validity of each position will be considered. Little research has been published on teaching English orthography to ESL adults, so references must be made to available studies done on NS children.

Proponents of the first position hold that English spelling is so unsystematic so as to make explicit instruction impossible. Perhaps these individuals have only examined English sound-spelling relationships and consequently believe that the phoneme-grapheme relationships are so weak so as to make explicit instruction questionable. However, this position places too great an emphasis upon lexical spelling and suggests an inadequate

understanding of the principles of what has been called *lexical relatedness morphology* (Bochner 1993).

The second view is that English orthography exhibits some systematicity, but that students will pick up English spelling at their own pace through exposure to written text and personal attempts at writing. A similar position is held by some primary school educators who advocate the *whole word* approach. They claim that when individuals are learning to read, they make more rapid progress if they identify whole words at a glance the way fluent readers seem to do for skilled reading is dependent upon fast, accurate word identification (Perfetti and Lesgold 1979, Perfetti 1985). *Whole word* or *whole language* proponents also claim children learn more if captivated by what they are reading and writing, even if invented spellings are initially used. Students taught by this approach are theoretically not stultified by explicit *drill and kill* spelling instruction and are not bored by primary readers in which vocabulary selection (based upon close phoneme-grapheme correspondences) results in sentences such as 'See Spot run' (Smith 1965, Goodman et al. 1989). A basic premise of the *whole word* approach is that if children read enough interesting text, they will with time not only gain a large sight vocabulary, but also come to see grapheme-phoneme relationships and thus learn how to spell as through *osmosis*. This approach assumes that children live in a *print-rich* environment, and it is estimated that the average eleven-year old American school child encounters more than one million running words of text a year (Nagy et al., 1985 and 1987).

Proponents of the 'osmosis' approach for adults may similarly believe that exposure to a volume of print will over time enable the NNS students in an academic institutions to spell English correctly. A related assumption may be that students are mature enough to understand the necessity of memorizing the spelling of any words they do not pick up as sight vocabulary. Interviews with NNS research students at the Institute of Education revealed that no one had received formal instruction in English orthography, so these individuals have managed to learn English by the *osmosis* approach, which adequately served their needs.

However, this is not proof that this is the best method, for they might have learned better using another technique and, furthermore, the method may not have ensured adequate literacy development for some students to succeed in their studies at home and ultimately to study abroad. There is also no published research indicating the efficacy of this approach with adult education students who do manual labor full time and consequently are exposed to print only a few hours a week in the classroom.

There is no adequate research on ESL/EFL adults taught by the *whole word* or *osmosis* approach. Research has been done with children to ascertain the efficacy of the *whole word* approach versus the phonics approach, but it is difficult to compare data across studies (Carbo 1988, Chall 1990, Adams 1990). It is therefore necessary to consider the third suggested approach.

The third view holds that English spelling not only can but should be taught for the learner to understand that English spelling works in different ways (Stubbs 1980). Certain words are best learned as sight vocabulary including those 400 highly irregular but frequently used words. Letters do correspond to sounds some of the time so that phonics instruction is very helpful in mastering the numerous English words whose spelling is based upon grapheme-phoneme correspondences. However, the systematicity of English spelling is not only dependent upon segmental sound spelling but also upon the underlying morphological structure.

A mastery of the alphabet is basic to reading because every aspect of reading is dependent upon speech and accuracy of letter perception. The names of the alphabet letters (and particularly vowels) also provide phonological clues. Although there is not a strict phoneme-grapheme correspondence in English as in Spanish, the skillful reader understands that English variations are not totally arbitrary but follow general rules by which the abstract underlying forms are converted into phonetic realizations. The individual understands that the systematicity of word formation extends beyond the representation of vowel phonemes to the groupings of vowel and/or consonant letters. The reading process is driven by the visual recognition of individual letters in familiar ordered sequence and is critically supported by the translation of those strings of letters into their phonological correspondences. Distinctive letter sequences provide visual clue strategies which in some instances are more helpful than phoneme-grapheme strategies.

Skilled spellers can visually recognize spelling patterns and link them to their phonological translations effortlessly and accurately. Spelling-sound regularities are also seen in what are known as *word families* (*bright, fight, might*). Children (as well as the young Mexican adult ESL students) have a larger spoken than written vocabulary. By utilizing spelling-sound regularities in word families, children can often transfer information correctly from the known spelling of a word to a phonetically similar one, thus quickly increasing the number of words they can spell. Research indicates that good spellers usually spell real words correctly regardless of their grapheme-phoneme irregularities. They will spell pseudo-words in accordance with patterns used in similarly sounded real words, such as in *length - wength*. Visual strategies are also used with irregular words, for when a phonological strategy does not work, people sometimes write down alternative spellings to see what *looks right*.

An early phonics emphasis appears to have less influence on comprehension as the years pass, probably because of the increasing emphasis upon the importance of schematic knowledge of the topic, vocabulary, and reasoning ability. Such studies have led some researchers to conclude that phonics facilitates word identification, which is a necessary factor in reading with good comprehension, but not the only one (Osborn et al. 1985: 37-8).

However, comprehensive analysis of more than thirty years of research into American reading instruction of children indicates the importance of including phonics in

any literacy instruction (Chall 1990, Adams 1990). Lack of research into this approach for the limited literacy adult suggests to me that phonics generalizations are not incorporated in adult ESL instruction because teachers cannot articulate basic phonics generalizations. A test given to 83 prospective and practicing NS/NNS teachers of ESL/EFL bears out my hypothesis.¹

In addition to phonics generalizations, the student must also understand the relation between the written symbol and the abstract lexical spelling of words, because English alphabet letter may not only represent sounds, but also segments of lexical spelling. A conscious awareness of the English phonological rule system enables a student to relate lexical segments to sounds in a systematic fashion. However, he cannot proceed on the assumption that English orthography is phonetically valid for sometimes written symbols must be interpreted according to lexical spellings. With lexical relatedness spelling, the reader does not need to abstract away unnecessary phonetic detail which would be present if the English spelling system were phonetically based.

In summary, proponents of explicit instruction in orthography would claim that 3% of English words must be acquired as sight vocabulary. However, skillful reading and/or writing also depends upon a deep and thorough acquisition of grapheme-phoneme relationships, word analysis skills, and a schematic rationale which spelling generalizations can provide. While hearing or memorizing such generalizations does not make a skillful decoder, generalizations are useful if they can be utilized with applicable words.

I maintain that an explicit awareness of these different organizing principles not only can, but should be taught particularly to adult ESL students who can use their analytical capabilities to understand the underlying system of English spelling in their acquisition of English literacy. Furthermore, contrastive analysis suggests that a conscious awareness of the phonemic and/or morphophonemic similarities and differences between L1 and L2 can be utilized in the acquisition of English orthography.

As the position has been taken that English orthography can be taught, a rationale must be developed for teaching ESL graphological literacy in a way that also utilizes transferable L1 skills.

2.4. A Rationale for Teaching ESL Graphological Literacy

Graphological literacy should not be considered as an end in and of itself, but neither can the skills involved be taken for granted and/or ignored. Anyone with limited literacy must attain a mechanical command of English in order to cope receptively and productively with written language. Consequently, the development of a rationale for teaching ESL graphological literacy must consider what mechanical literacy skills the young adult Mexican ESL student needs to learn in English, while also taking into account how the Spanish literacy skills and analytical capabilities of an adult can best be utilized in the process.

Receptive uses of written English are premised upon a command of the English alphabet. Most young adult Mexican ESL students have a visual familiarity with the alphabet. However, many have not mastered the alphabetic sequence. This skill is not difficult to acquire and is frequently utilized in highly literate technological societies for it enables an individual to access any information organized alphabetically such as in a phone book, a dictionary, or an index.

While the basic form of the letters and the alphabet remain the same in most languages using the Roman alphabet, each language has its own names for the letters. Mastery of the English names for the alphabet letters (and the numbers) enables the ESL student to spell his name or any other word out loud if needed. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, a command of the English names of the alphabet letters and an understanding of the phonological clues inherent in the letter names provides some of the phonemic awareness necessary for reading and writing.

While most people read more than they write, the mastery of the alphabet is also basic to productive uses of written language. While most Mexican schools only teach print script, in most American schools children are taught how to write the English alphabet in two basic forms: print script followed by cursive. Print script is most frequently encountered in receptive and productive uses of written language. Most published text is in some font of print script, and writers are usually requested to print information on any document. However, Americans commonly use cursive when writing in longhand. Therefore, it is useful for the Mexican immigrant to have some command of cursive, for while he may not have any productive need for it, receptive demands occur if he is given a message or work order in cursive.

Most of the ESL students have the productive capacity to form each of the alphabet letters in some way, but they often print using a combination of upper and lower case letters (Chapter 1.5). Mastery of the standard form of printing the alphabet with the appropriate use of upper and lower case letters formed in accordance with the American norm is very useful. The limited literacy immigrant may write very little, mainly to convey the same factual information on documents (such as name and address). While more literate individuals are usually aware of the visual impression given by a handwritten text, individuals who read very little may sometimes think that the content is of the essence (particularly if only factual information is requested) and that the form is irrelevant.

However, in any productive use of language such as a job application, the visual impression given by a handwritten text can be as important as the visual impression given by the applicant himself. Inappropriate uses of upper and lower case letters may be equated with low intelligence and/or limited education, a messy presentation may suggest imprecision in other aspects of an individual's work, and using Mexican rather than American norms of letter formation may signal lack of familiarity with American ways. While such assumptions may or may not be correct, a command of the written alphabet according to the American norm can be useful in giving *a good impression* and can be

acquired relatively quickly and easily, thus providing substantial payoff for a minimal investment of effort.

The simplest productive uses of written English include the ability to copy any written text (such as one's address) or to write down any information that is spelled out loud, be it the name of a customer, a word the individual does not understand, or whatever. Yet the ESL student also needs to utilize the alphabet in order to write words — and ultimately texts. This productive capability to write the alphabet also reinforces receptive acuity, facilitating the development of speed and accuracy of letter perception — both fundamental aspects of reading and writing.

The fundamental difference between receptive and productive uses of language is that 'Reading is from the unknown via the context to the known. Spelling is from the known to the unknown' (Peters 1967: 7). When a reader sees a word, he can has a choice of three approaches: he can try to read it by sounding it out utilizing grapheme-phoneme correspondences, he can recognize it by sight either as a whole or by seeing the morphological relations in the lexical item, or he can use a combination of these approaches and perhaps also be assisted by the context. According to Cordts,

Phonics may be said to function effectively in word perception in reading when it enables the reader to come so close to the word's identity that with the aid of the context he can guess the word. (1965: 14)

On the other hand, the writer must be able to convert heard phonemes into unknown graphemes in order to spell a word. In this process he can use phonics generalizations he has learned or simply write the words from memory but context is of little assistance. Therefore, phonics plays a more important role in spelling than in reading, for phonics assists an individual in writing down the sounds he hears. Without phonics he would simply have to rely heavily on memorization.

From the perspective of both reading and writing, phonics instruction can be crucial to any individual with emergent literacy for English is an alphabetic language in which there are consistent, although not entirely predictable, relationships between letters and sounds. When these relationships are learned, many of the words that the ESL student has in his spoken language become accessible when seen in print and he (like the young child learning to read) can be said to have *broken the code*.

The ESL student with limited Spanish literacy knows the Spanish names of the alphabet letters which provide phonological clues enabling him to sound out most Spanish words. Yet he must master the phoneme-grapheme relationships in English, particularly where these differ from Spanish — as with vowels. While many of the discrete sounds in Spanish are similar to those in English, an understanding of the differences is a prerequisite to transferring knowledge about phoneme-grapheme relationships from L1 to L2 (Appendix 2.2).

If a Mexican ESL student transfers what he knows of phoneme-grapheme relationships directly from Spanish to English, he will be able to write most of the English

consonants correctly. Most English consonants have only one sound and a direct grapheme-phoneme relationship exists with the letters *b, d, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, w*, and initial *y*. Rather than denoting more precise allophonic distinctions (as might be made regarding the different pronunciations of sounds such as *r* or *d*), using more general categories, the following transfer errors are frequent: the English *v* is often written as *b* (the Spanish pronunciation of *b* and *v* are similar); the English *h* is often written with a *j*; and *y* is written with *ll*. The ESL student must learn that some consonants represent more than one phoneme and understand where unsounded consonants occur in English orthography. The limited number of English two- and three-letter consonant blends can usually be sounded out in reading and writing. However, on the whole English consonants exhibit close phoneme-grapheme relationships. These are often similar to those in Spanish, but exceptions follow definite patterns which can be learned.

English vowels, on the other hand, can create three major difficulties for the Mexican adult ESL student: the written form he associates with vowel sound is usually not the same in English and Spanish, an English grapheme can represent more than one phoneme, and an English vowel sound can be written in more than one way.

The first problem has already been referred to in the discussion of the alphabet. In many languages, including Spanish and English, the name of the vowel letter provides a phonological clue. Therefore, while the names of the vowel letters in Spanish are useful in mastering that orthography, the names of the English vowels only match the English *long* vowel sounds. A command of the English vowel letter names aids in mastering *long* vowel sounds, which are usually written utilizing two vowel letters (*Make the train stay*). The *short* vowel sounds (*cat*) are usually written with one vowel letter. There are other consistent vowel patterns which occur less frequently. *R* affects vowel sounds. Vowel phonemes can be written in more than one way (*all - taught - raw*). Diphthongs have alternate spellings (*noisy boy*). The weak unstressed vowel SCHWA sound can be represented by each of the vowel letters (*bedlam, beaten, beautiful, beckon*). One grapheme can represent more than one phoneme (*go od fo od*).

The spelling of English homophones can be learned in relation to other words (*wood - would, could, should*). If homophones involve verbs, relationships can be seen with the stem (*throne - throw, thrown*). While the etymology of a word often determines its spelling, individuals without such background knowledge of foreign languages (such as most of the Mexican ESL students) may simply have to learn how to spell homophones. Homographs can also confuse, as in the different pronunciations of the noun and verb form of *use*.

The considerable variability, particularly in the sound of vowels and vowel combinations in English, increases the difficulty of becoming literate in the language. However, the spelling of root words or unbound morphemes in English is much more regular than often thought. Major and secondary patterns prevail whereas the tiny number of exceptions often follow patterns based upon their roots (Appendix 2.3).

An understanding of English phonics facilitates literacy acquisition by the Mexican ESL student, for a sufficiently large number of English words follow primary or secondary patterns. Phonics is also related to a utilization of hundreds of Spanish cognates, for the ESL student can incorporate hundreds of Spanish-English cognates into his spoken and written vocabulary if he understands basic conversion rules based on phonics principles. Cognates with direct transfer have identical spellings, although consonants must sometimes be doubled after short vowel sounds (*posible* > *possible*). Cognates with indirect transfer have the same meaning, but a slightly modified orthography following regular conversion rules involving the initial and final sounds in nouns and adjectives, suffixes, infinitival endings as well as consistent consonant changes. False cognates also exist, which orthographically look like cognates although spelling variations may occur. However, the disparate meanings of false cognates have to be learned to prevent misunderstandings both in written and spoken language, as with the Spanish word *embarazada*, which in English means *pregnant*, not *embarrassed*.

Since even low literacy Mexicans can spell most Spanish words correctly due to the close phoneme-grapheme relationships, the ESL student can be assisted in orthography (as well as vocabulary development) if he has some understanding of direct cognates, the orthographic differences between Spanish and English roots and affixes in cognates of indirect transfer, and false cognates. If the student masters regular conversion patterns (Appendix 2.4 and more extensively in Chaillé 1982: 55-63), he can more readily learn how to read and/or spell many English words correctly. Regular morphemic rules, such as those governing the formation of plurals and the simple past can also be consciously learned.

In conclusion, the optimal approach to teaching English orthography capitalizes upon the student's knowledge of the alphabet and his understanding of grapheme-phoneme relationships in Spanish. This information cannot be ignored for if the differences between the two languages are not explained, the ESL student may come to think that English spelling is totally arbitrary and may believe that he has to learn to read and write words one by one. However, the phonics approach enables the ESL student to make use of the phoneme-grapheme relationships that transfer directly (as with many consonants), while making adjustment when these are expressed differently (as with vowels). The student's comparatively large English vocabulary can also be utilized in the teaching of *word families* which enable a student to see how phonics generalizations can be applied to a number of words. Principles of English relatedness spelling can also be learned.

Finally, the student's analytical capabilities as an adult make it possible for him to transfer information and grasp generalizations in a way that might be more difficult for a child lacking literacy in any language. Of course, a limited number of very irregular words still have to be learned by heart.

This combination of L1/L2 capabilities and L2 graphological needs provides the rationale for explicit instruction in graphological literacy. It can be concluded that an

appropriate syllabus would include instruction in basic alphabet skills, phonics, lexical relatedness spelling, and contrastive analysis while utilizing the analytical capabilities of the young adult Mexican ESL student. However, there is still one more aspect of graphological literacy which must be considered — namely how paralinguistic aspects of spoken language can be transmitted into writing through the mechanics of grouping words on the page using capitalization and punctuation to denote phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and larger units of prose text.

2.5. Beyond Sounds and Spellings

In the transfer of medium from speaking to writing, English orthography provides codified expressions for all the established wordings of the language but orthography does not incorporate all the features of speech. As Abercrombie indicates:

The letters in which language is normally written do not represent more than a part of spoken language. Writing, of course, is perfectly intelligible without these missing ingredients. But then writing is a medium for language in its own right, and though it is, in the last analysis, constructed on the basis of spoken language, the aim of writing is not, usually, to represent actual spoken utterances which have occurred. (1965: 36)

What is it, then, which is difficult to combine with the visual representation of words?

If the sentence, 'You bought that', were spoken, one would not only hear phonemes, but also suprasegmentals. So one might hear, 'YOU bought that', 'You BOUGHT that,' or 'You bought THAT'. There are two major categories of features — the prosodic and the paralinguistic. Prosodies are the systematic grammatical and phonological features of the English language seen in intonation (including tonicity and tone), rhythm, phrasing, and pausing. Paralinguistic features are non-systemic, such as the vocal and gestural variations that carry meaning in English speech, which can include voice qualities, tempo, loudness, and gestures of the face and body. In addition, there are non-linguistic indexical features which indicate the identity of the speaker, such as the pitch of voice, resonance, tension and personal preferences for certain prosodic and paralinguistic patterns. Words are made up of discrete elements, and although lexis can be grouped in various ways, writing basically has linear and sequential configurations. To indicate more of what occurs in written speech, some sort of secondary notational system would be needed to indicate these other patterns which are often larger and variable. Also missing in written discourse are features of the context and the particular moment such as the speaker's state of mind as well as how he processes and assigns value to what he is communicating.

Punctuation is one of the major devices that can help to overcome the omission of prosodic features in written language, and only comes into being when spoken language is written down. In an oral culture people are less conscious of such boundary markers (Halliday 1985: 36). When language becomes written down people have to try to express the beginning and end of units such as tone groups, phrases, clauses, and sentences in



some way. They also have to become aware of the structure of language and its principal constituent parts. Punctuation develops as accepted boundary markers of these grammatical or phonological units. Punctuation marks — such as the period [full stop], exclamation point, and question mark — all indicate the end of different types of sentences. Other notation indicates units of different size, such as clauses, phrases, words, and morphemes (Halliday 1985: 35, Appendix 2.5).

The use and formation of these markers are similar in many languages. While punctuation usually follows the grammatical structure of a language, alternatively it represents the interpretation of the text in phonological terms, stretches between commas indicating tone groups. All of these features show the systematicity of human language as seen in written form.

While punctuation seems perfectly logical and almost self-evident to a quite literate person, the basic concept of a sentence is often complicated for someone with low literacy. Many of the young adult Mexican ESL students do not have a command of this literacy convention (Chapter 1.5). The concept of a sentence may be difficult to comprehend because people tend to speak in phrases, rather than sentences. Recordings of spoken discourse indicate that the longest pauses are often not found between sentences but between the subject and the verb, or the verb and the rest of the sentence, as the speaker briefly stops to try to figure out how to put her thoughts into words. If students have low literacy, they usually also have a limited command of grammar, so teaching the necessity of having a subject and a predicate in a complete sentence makes little sense. It is often more helpful to get students to think of a sentence as a complete thought, that can stand on its own. In written language a sentence is marked by beginning with a capital letter; it ends with a period, or in some cases with a question mark or an exclamation point. A student with limited literacy also needs to learn that capital letters not only denote sentence beginnings, but have additional uses such as to indicate proper nouns.

The ESL student must also understand the use of boundary and status markers other than the period, and recognize that these are sometimes expressed differently in Spanish and English. In English an exclamation point only occurs at the end of the sentence. In a Spanish exclamatory sentence the literate Mexican would use an inverted exclamation point at the beginning of the sentence and a *regular* one at the end. In a complex sentence the exclamation points enclose the relevant phrase. In Spanish interrogative sentences a similar pattern using inverted and regular question marks applies.

Quotations are also governed by different conventions. Mexicans and Americans have identical usage conventions, placing double quotation marks around the first order and single quotation marks around the second order — a reversal of the British norm. The student with limited literacy must learn that quotation marks can clarify the intended meaning, for 'The manager said the employee was lying' could read quite differently using marks of direct discourse, namely 'The manager,' said the employee, 'was lying'.

The above discussion might have given the impression that there are set rules for punctuation. However, whereas there are accepted standard spellings of words given in dictionaries, punctuation is a much more fluid concept: 'I should define punctuation as being governed 2/3 by rule and 1/3 by taste' (Carey 1976: 13) or 'punctuation marks are navigational aids, not scientific or moral laws' (Howard 1984: 172). Basically punctuation is a convention — a politeness of printers. It becomes quite clear through comparing spoken and written language, that punctuation is not part of the intrinsic structure of language but that it has been imposed on written language only within the last few centuries in order to help the reader for the following reasons:

In speaking individuals can use pause and intonation, gesture and change of tone, the raised eyebrow or the expressive Indian rocking of the head from side to side indicating doubt, diffidence, and deference to punctuate our words and elucidate our meaning. Such aids are not available to the written word. (Howard 1984: 155)

Some writers use punctuation and fonts not only following conventional norms, but in innovative ways to convey aspects of speech which are difficult to express in written form, sometimes even writing in the sounds ('gasp') a person might make (Angelou 1969: 121, 260). Punctuation marks can also become graphic devices used to express reactions when no words are spoken at all, such as in the children's books of A.A. Milne:

'We might go in your umbrella,' said Pooh.

'??'

'We might go in your umbrella', said Pooh.

'??'

'We might go in your umbrella.' said Pooh.

'!!!!!!'

For suddenly Christopher Robin saw that they might. (1972: 139)

The literate may use punctuation in innovative ways, but students with emerging ESL literacy must be taught the very basics of punctuation. Students easily misunderstand or systematically misapply principles. I have seen student essays containing no punctuation of any sort or with a period between each word indicating that punctuation can be as mysterious as spelling.

While type font, spacing, and size are sometimes used to achieve special effects within sentences in fiction, they are much more common in the formatting of whole books and in advertising. ESL students mainly need a receptive awareness of these features. However, what was formerly the domain of those in the printing trade now has importance for individuals with access to personal computers. Most of the limited literacy ESL students do not have access to computers at present, but may as they become more literate in English. Many of the growing number of bilingual jobs require some computer literacy, such as word processing.

In summary, punctuation is used to delineate different kinds of sentences, as well as features found within them. As with the graphological skills associated with word formation, punctuation skills cannot be assumed, but must be learned by the ESL student with low L1/L2 literacy.

2.6. Conclusion

Those *visible marks* which constitute graphological literacy constitute that mechanical aspect of literacy which makes it possible for an ESL student to transfer what he hears in sounds or phonemes into marks or graphemes on the page. It has been argued that although phonics have become an integral part of elementary school ESL instruction in the United States, phonics have not been emphasized in adult ESL education in the late twentieth century. There are compelling reasons for integrating phonics into the adult education ESL curriculum. It has been shown that the grapheme-phoneme relationships in English are more regular than sometimes thought. Limited literacy adult ESL Mexican students understand the principles of phonics from Spanish. If they are taught differences in the grapheme-phoneme relationships between English and Spanish, students can transfer what they know to English facilitating the acquisition of English spelling among individuals who have little exposure to print on the job and do little reading in their leisure time. A mastery of graphological literacy also includes punctuation which has developed as the acceptable means of indicating the beginning and end of units such as words, phrases, various kinds of sentences.

If graphological literacy implies conforming to the norm of a country in terms of spelling, punctuation, and penmanship, its instruction could be seen as an attempt to impose the standards of the host society. At the same time the ability to conform to established norms can also lead to empowerment, for individuals become able not only to read the writing of others, but also to express themselves in an acceptable form.

Graphological literacy is basic to literacy, but it is clearly not all. To make an analogy with music, the ability to spell words is a bit like knowing the notes on the scale, and punctuation is similar to (although much more limited than) rhythmic notation in music. But just as scales in and of themselves do not constitute music, in like fashion correctly spelled words alone do not constitute discourse. Just as the musician utilizes his knowledge of notes, scales, and musical notation to read and write music, to become literate an individual must acquire the mechanical skills of spelling, punctuation, and penmanship. These are not ends in and of themselves, but rather means of expressing thoughts and ideas on paper. How to achieve these goals in the daily round will be discussed in the next chapter on functional literacy.

1 A test was devised to determine whether an ESL teacher could read a short list of words related by some principle and then recognize the word patterns, articulate the appropriate phonic generalizations, and identify exceptions. The focus was upon common spelling patterns such as long and short vowel sounds and the orthographic changes generated by suffixes. Teachers were asked to explain in simple English why

the words in each group were spelled the way they were and give the rule relevant to most of the words. If there were exceptions, the rules for these should also be given.

Test results of 83 NS and NNS ESL teachers in California and at the Institute of Education in London indicated that only elementary school teachers who worked in schools with strong phonics programs could quickly and with ease articulate what phonics generalizations they would use to explain the words that followed the dominant pattern, what words were exceptions, and how these could be taught. Test and applicable phonics generalizations are given in Appendix 2.6.

- 2 Phonics generalizations are used in educational research research, such as the computer analysis by Hanna of 'short and long vowel sounds' (Appendix 2.1). The terms 'short and long vowel sounds' are also used when teaching children learning to read and write (e.g. Heilman 1989). As the goal of the research project is to develop insights relative to the relationship between visual letter patterns and the sounds these patterns usually represent, the same terminology will be used, rather than the International Phonetic Alphabet.

'Long and short vowel sounds' have been used in American spelling instruction for over one hundred years. Because the names of the first and fifth letters of the Greek alphabet are *alpha* and *epsilon*, these pronunciations are used when one talks about those letters. This is not to imply that the SOUNDS represented by A and E are under discussion, but rather the names of the LETTERS. Thus the terms such as 'short A' and 'long A' refer to the names of the LETTERS for purposes of phonics instruction and not to the phonetic quality of the SOUNDS, even though in phonemic transcription the vowel names are diphthongs.

Chapter 3: Functional Literacy

3.1. Introduction

While graphological literacy involves the rather mechanical skills of phonics, punctuation, and penmanship, how these tools are utilized in the literacy activities of everyday life is known as functional literacy. At the time Bloomfield wrote that 'Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks' (1933: 21), the first formal research was being done into what became known as functional literacy. Graphological literacy refers to a group of mechanical skills with given parameters, but functional literacy occurs within a social context, so that it is difficult to define what knowledge and skills an individual might need and what the cost and/or benefit of their acquisition might be. As one of the primary responsibilities of an adult is gainful employment, functional literacy must also be considered in terms of its economic benefit to the individual and society.

A historical overview of the evolution of the term will indicate various attempts at definition. As instruction in functional literacy has often been justified because of a purported relationship between individual/societal literacy and economic development, this claim will have to be reviewed.

If functional literacy can and should be taught, parameters of the concept must be established. Individuals living in a highly technological society are faced with a myriad of literacy tasks. These have been classified by frequency of use (Heath 1983) and purpose of the task (Halliday 1985). Functional literacy tasks grouped by contexts of use have also been reclassified by text type (Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992). The usefulness of these different attempts at classification will be analyzed in order to establish a framework for considering the English functional literacy needs and uses of the young Mexican adult immigrant. This information will then be utilized to develop a rationale for teaching functional literacy to the target population.

3.2. The scope and importance of functional literacy

Functional literacy, like terms such as *liberty* and *justice*, is often assumed to contain primal qualities important to a culture, but upon closer scrutiny appears to be much more complex (Venezky 1990: 2). In the early part of the twentieth century an individual was considered to be literate if he had completed a given number of years of schooling. However, in both World Wars many American soldiers, who had completed enough formal education to be classified literate, were not able to do their assigned jobs. Research into the degree of reading and writing proficiency needed by a soldier to perform his duties effectively in the US Army led the American educator, W.S. Gray, to develop the term

functional literacy. This expression was first used by the US military but it later gained international acceptance after its incorporation into the following UNESCO definition:

A person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group. (Gray 1956: 24)

The definition represents something of a tautology as *literacy* is used to define *literate*. That problem and its relativism aside, the definition has value because it emphasizes that literacy is not an abstract concept but relates to the literacy skills needed by the individual to operate in his cultural and socio-economic context.

Gray realizes that functional literacy cannot be defined simply as the ability to sign one's name, the completion of a particular year of schooling, or the attainment of a specified reading grade level. Furthermore, functional literacy is not simply a set of isolated skills associated with reading and writing but involves the use of specific skills for specific purposes in specific contexts. In this sense functional literacy requires procedural and declarative knowledge. As functional literacy implies a complex of skills used in socially relevant contexts of the adult world, it has been suggested that perhaps the term should even be *functional adult literacy* (Nafzinger et al. 1976). Certainly the American distinction between adults acquiring and using *literacy* versus children learning to *read* and *write* is useful and will be retained here.

Functional literacy connotes aspects of reading and writing used in a given cultural context but there has been ongoing debate as to which specific abilities or knowledge count as functional literacy and what levels to employ for measurement. A 1957 UNESCO report suggests that literacy should include a wide range of capabilities:

Literacy is a characteristic acquired by individuals in varying degrees from just above none to an indeterminate upper level. Some individuals are more literate or less literate than others, but it is really not possible to speak of literate and illiterate persons as two distinct categories. (UNESCO 1957: 18)

This definition indicates that orality and literacy lie on a continuum. Functional literacy is neither a unitary nor unidimensional phenomenon which is either present or absent — a position substantiated by more recent research. For example, in any given culture meanings and uses have been shown to vary between socio-economic and/or socio-cultural groups within a given community (Heath 1983) or within members of a group (Street 1993). Some individuals cope in environments where print processing is required by incorporating both oral and literate skills coupled with an awareness of nonverbal clues (Heath 1983, Wagner 1994). As functional literacy is a cultural practice subject to a wide variety of social and cultural forces, the level of skill evidenced by an individual may increase or decrease depending upon the setting and the concomitant literacy requirements. Changing literacy requirements within a society or even within an individual's own life may render the same person more or less literate at different times or in different settings (Wagner 1994).

Returning to UNESCO, this organization decided to expand its definition of literacy in 1962:

A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community; and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development. (cited by Oxenham 1982: 87)

This new definition increases the scope of literacy to include arithmetic as an essential skill needed by an individual to operate successfully in his community, for many functional literacy tasks have a numerical component.¹ Literacy and numeracy are viewed not as ends in themselves and neither can their acquisition be equated with use. Both are assets only if they can be utilized to do something.

The 1962 UNESCO definition expands the domain of use, for literacy skills are no longer spoken of exclusively with reference to technical ability and functionality within the community, but are also articulated in terms of possible personal development. While this broader perspective makes for a more inclusive definition, here functional literacy will be limited to a conception of the procedural knowledge needed for transactional uses of literacy by an individual in the daily round.²

An explicit concern with functional literacy coincided with the creation of independent nations after World War II. High illiteracy rates in many of these countries were perceived as an impediment to economic development, so *investment in human capital* was encouraged. This approach held that sufficient investment in literacy and schooling would lead to economic growth (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985, Schultz 1981) and was based upon a hypothesis relating adult literacy rates to economic growth (Anderson and Bowman 1965). A society was estimated to need a 40% literacy rate for economic takeoff (Anderson 1966), whereas an 80% national adult literacy rate would be required for a minimal amount of economic development (Bowman and Anderson 1973). These projections were based upon aggregate data across many countries of the world — data which seemed to indicate a significant correlation between GNP [gross national product] and UNESCO literacy rates.

The *take off* hypothesis easily fits into Rostow's economic development construct which proposes that traditional rural societies with low productivity, limited infrastructure, and rigid institutions need improved institutional structure, increased agricultural productivity, and the emergence of an entrepreneurial class in order for sustained economic growth to occur (Schiller 1991: 915). The 40% literacy threshold has been viewed as a requirement for modernization, political development and stability, increased standards of living, fertility control, and so on. However, subsequent research in developing nations gaining independence in the 1960s and 1970s indicates that economic development is dependent upon a multiplicity of elements: a society's literacy rate is one among many factors such as the infrastructure of economic and social forces, technology, banking, political organization, social will, and religious sentiment.

While there is a link between literacy, levels of education, employment, and wages, the interrelationship between these factors and others within a society are complex (Berg 1971, Human Development Report 1990). In economic terms, output is equal to production divided by the number of workers. Therefore, output is not simply dependent upon the education level of workers. Rather the significant change within the equation occurs when the level and quality of investment in machines and infrastructure changes. It is difficult to establish whether and/or what kind of variable functional literacy is, but the fact remains that no poor countries have high literacy rates (Galbraith 1994:86).

All this is not to suggest that concern with functional literacy levels remains in the domain of developing countries. The goal of a high literacy level for a large proportion of the population in highly technological (and literate) societies is a relatively recent phenomenon (Resnick and Resnick 1977). In technologically advancing societies, both the number and types of written materials are constantly expanding. When increasing numbers of citizens are expected to use this information in new and more complex ways, literacy skills must respond to new requirements and expanded opportunities for social and economic growth. If the demands for higher literacy levels caused by rapid technological, economic, and labor market changes seem to surpass levels of attainment, increasing attention is paid to the skill deficiencies of workers (and the unemployed) whose level of functional literacy is below that required by the social context (Kirsch et al. 1992: 2).

From an economic perspective, functional literacy cannot be isolated as the only dependent variable in a country's growth and development or in an individual's employment opportunities. However, literacy can become an economic factor in relationship to manpower planning, particularly if jobs actually require a given level of literacy. In highly technological societies literacy is usually a factor in gaining employment. While entry-level jobs may require only limited literacy, educational diplomas become a factor in job selection when the completion of a certain level of education is considered to correlate not only with a certain level of literacy but also with thinking skills and work habits which could be transferred to any work place.

The complexity of the socio-economic variables also make functional literacy hard to define, for different skills may be required in different domains of life — be it in the work place, in interaction with the bureaucratic infrastructure, or in running a household. The level of proficiency needed by an individual will be influenced not only by his personal needs but also by requirements of societal infrastructures. Furthermore, not all literacy tasks are performed in isolation so that reading and writing are often entwined with spoken language in interaction with other people. Consequently attempts to judge an individual's functional literacy levels using paper and pencil tests fail to reveal an individual's ability to complete functional literacy tasks, for he may utilize other interpersonal skills and relationships in negotiating such literacy events (Heath 1983, Street 1993).

In summary, although functional literacy is a complex term, the 1962 UNESCO definition of literacy provides an adequate point of departure in referring to knowledge and

skills which make it possible for an individual to operate within his cultural and socio-economic context. This raises the question as to what receptive and productive literacy tasks occur in a highly technological society.

3.3. The Content and Types of Functional Literacy Tasks

The establishment of domains and types of functional literacy tasks is a prerequisite to developing a rationale for teaching this aspect of literacy. Attempts at classification have approached functional literacy from different perspectives. Heath (1983) lists literacy tasks sequentially according to a frequency analysis of reading and writing usage. Halliday (1985) groups reading activities by categories of use, such as for action or information. The extensive American Young Adult Literacy Assessment originally considered contexts of use (Chapter 1.3), but later utilized classification by text type (Kirsch et al. 1992, 1993; Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992). It will be posited that while no one approach is sufficient in and of itself, these classifications can be used in conjunction with each other to develop a framework for analyzing the functional literacy needs and uses of the young adult Mexican ESL student.

A frequency analysis of literacy tasks was part of an extensive ethnographic study of literacy done in a mill town of the Piedmont area in the Carolinas along the eastern slope of the Appalachians (Heath 1983). This comparative study of children in white and black families included a frequency analysis of types of home reading and writing uses, which indicate the possible scope of functional literacy tasks. The following list indicates reading activities in which adults were involved for more than five minutes a day in relative order of frequency:

INSTRUMENTAL: Reading to gain information for meeting practical needs and scheduling daily life (labels, telephone dials, clocks, wattage figures on light bulbs, bills and checks, school, church, and voluntary association notices, directions for repairing or assembling household items or toys).

NEWS-RELATED: Reading to gain information about third parties or distant events (newspaper items, news magazines, political flyers, reports from local congressmen).

RECREATIONAL: Reading during leisure time or in planning for recreational events (comics, sports section of newspaper, sports magazines, novels, movie ads, invitations to parties, motel or campground directories).

CRITICAL/EDUCATIONAL: Reading to increase one's abilities to consider and/or discuss political, social, aesthetic, or religious knowledge (popular novels and non-fiction books, news magazines and out-of-town newspapers, denominational newsletters and magazines, the Bible, reviews of Broadway plays and ballet or symphony performances in New York or Washington).³

SOCIAL-INTERACTIONAL: Reading to gain information pertinent to social relationships (greeting cards, letters from family and friends, newspaper feature, college alumni magazine).

CONFIRMATIONAL: Reading to check or confirm facts or beliefs often from archival materials stored and retrieved only on special occasions (wills, income tax forms, bills, birth certificates, passports). (1983: 258)

This list is limited to an analysis of frequency of use of reading in the home but it could be extended to include reading in other domains such as the work place and the community. However, instrumental reading uses would probably remain the highest for transactional uses of literacy involve the understanding and transmission of factual information.

The frequency of writing uses follows a pattern similar to that seen in the reading analysis:

MEMORY AIDS: Writing to serve as a memory aid for both the writer and others (grocery lists, notes in photo albums, lists of things to do, recipes, reminder notes of dues, meetings, chores, lists of telephone numbers).

REINFORCEMENT OR SUBSTITUTES FOR ORAL MESSAGES: Writing used when direct oral communication was not possible or a written message was needed for legal purposes (notes for tardiness to school, message left by adults for children coming home before parent arrived home and vice versa, business letters related to consumer goods or politics).

SOCIAL-INTERACTIONAL: Writing to give information pertinent to social relationships or parental role responsibilities (thank you notes, letters, 'practice' writing or drawing for and with preschoolers, joint parent - child negotiation of written homework assignments — reports, stories, poems, etc.).

FINANCIAL: Writing to record numerals and to write out amounts and purposes of expenditures, and for signatures (checks, signing bills and writing check numbers on them, filling out tithe envelopes for church, ordering from mail-order catalogues).

EXPOSITORY: Occasional tasks brought home from the job or church and civic duties: writing in connected prose to summarize generalizations and back-up specifics for other people; writer envisions or 'knows' audience and attempts to include only those definitions and facts believed not to be known to the addressee, often includes numerals (quarterly or annual reports of business operations, summaries of group and individual past actions — accident or quality-control reports, church nominating committee summary). (Heath 1983: 259)

This list indicates that most writing was transactional and involved information transfer. There were no writing categories which could be equated with the recreational and critical/educational uses of reading, suggesting that most literate people read more than they write — particularly if individuals use literacy for their own purposes.

The aim of these two lists was to indicate frequency of reading and writing, so receptive and productive uses of written language were considered separately. A comparison of the two indicates that although there are definite differences, many functional literacy tasks (such as filling in application forms or paying bills) involve both reading and writing. This suggests that categories of literacy tasks could be developed which would be applicable to both reading and writing activities.

Frequency of use cannot, however, be equated with the relative importance of the activities. An individual might read daily notes from family members and only the occasional note from the boss at work, pay utility bills monthly, pay property tax every six months, pay income tax annually, and complete job applications even less frequently. Yet interaction with the economic and bureaucratic infrastructure of a highly technological

society necessitates written communication, which, although infrequent, may be a basic part of living in such a culture. Furthermore, the resultant literacy task may be of greater importance than the more frequent personal uses of written text.

Prioritization according to frequency also does not consider requisite proficiency levels. A related factor is whether an individual would have to complete the literacy task alone (such as reading the note from an employer) or whether he could get help from others (such as in doing income tax returns).

Frequency listing also does not indicate whether L1 or L2 must be used. Finally, if a written text is for public consumption or only for private use will influence the importance of accurate spelling and good handwriting. Graphological skills become much more important if the text will be read by individuals outside the family circle (Chapter 2.4). With these unresolved problems in mind, a classification of literacy activities by categories of use will be considered.

Halliday posits three different categories of use based upon a *language diary* recording what was read in the course of a week. His focus upon reading stems from fact that most people read more than they write. However, if his list were extended to denote whether reading and or writing is involved in the task, the basic method of categorization would still hold:

LITERACY ACTIVITIES BY CATEGORIES OF USE:

1. primarily for action:

public signs, e.g. on roads and stations; product labels and instructions, e.g. on food, tools, or toys purchased, recipes; maps; television and radio guides; bills; menus; telephone directories; ballot papers; computer manuals, monitors, and printouts.

primarily for social contact:

personal correspondence: letters, postcards, greeting cards

2. primarily for information:

newspapers (news, editorials) and current affairs magazines; hobby magazines; non-fiction books, including textbooks; public notices; advertisements; political pamphlets; scholastic, medical, etc. reports; guidebooks and travel literature.

3. primarily for entertainment:

light magazines, comic strips; fiction books; poetry and drama; newspaper features; film subtitles; games, including computer games.

(Halliday 1985: 40-41)

Halliday indicates that while the categories are useful, they are not clear cut, for information may be read now for action later — or instructional text may also be entertaining. A comparison of the Heath and Halliday lists also suggests that any individual's personal list would be influenced by his reading ability, his interests, and the amount and/or kind of reading involved in his professional activities.

Halliday's distinctions between action, information, and entertainment provide a useful perspective, but they do not resolve the unanswered questions raised with reference to the Heath list — categories of use do not indicate the relative importance of the activities, the requisite proficiency levels in L1/L2, or whether the texts are for public or private use.

Another limitation of both the Heath and the Halliday classifications is that there is no clear delineation of social context of use. Any negotiation of meaning involves systemic knowledge of the language system, as well as 'ideational' schemata of content area and 'interpersonal' schemata or background knowledge of the rhetorical, organizational structure of the type of text (Widdowson 1983). The conventionally accepted uses of language with their own rhetorical conventions associated with content areas constitute genre. An important aspect of functional literacy is understanding the genres of frequently encountered written texts, hence the advantage of considering functional literacy tasks by textual characteristics and contexts of use.

A review of the Heath and Halliday listings indicates that they could be regrouped into contexts of use. One large study initially using such a classification was an extensive assessment of the literacy abilities of young American adults was undertaken by the US Department of Labor in the 1980s.⁴ The researchers classified literacy materials these individuals might encounter in terms of six contexts of use: work, consumer economics, community and citizenship, home and family, health and safety, and leisure and recreation (Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992: 20, see also Chapter 1.3). These categories have been utilized to develop a content-based list, sequenced by possible frequency of use. The following classification not only lists literacy tasks an individual might encounter, but also indicates whether task completion by young adult Mexicans would commonly be dependent upon a command of English and/or Spanish:

LITERACY TASKS BY CONTEXTS OF USE IN DAILY LIFE

Needs within the home:

(Note: Penmanship and spelling are not as important in the private domain as they would be in the public.)

* Food:

Read: Product ingredients and instructions (English)

Read and write: Recipes (English or Spanish)

* Clothing (English):

Read: Labels on clothing, washing instructions, sewing patterns

* Shelter (English):

Read: Home maintenance information such as tool and appliance instructions, instructions on products, in manuals and magazines

Read and write: Housing payment (rent or mortgage), utility bills (water, gas, electricity, phone, garbage, taxes)

* Social contact (English or Spanish):

Read and write: Phone numbers, notes, postcards, letters

* Health (English and Spanish):

Read: Medicine labels, instructions, information about medical issues such as contraception and AIDS

Read and write: Medical forms

Job-related needs (English):

Read: Signs at work, instructions on materials used, work manuals, reports

Read and write: Job applications, work orders, income tax withholding forms

Finances and consumer economics (English):

Read: Types of currency, advertising, installment buying

Read and write: Money orders, bank accounts (savings, checking), credit cards, taxes

Transportation (English):

Read: Road signs, store signs, public transportation (signs, routes, and fees), road maps, instruction manuals for bicycles, motorcycles, and cars

Read and write: Driver's license application form

Community and government services and responsibilities (English):

* Governmental services:

Read: General information bulletins

Read and write: Social service applications (for legal residents)

* The law:

Read: Tickets, legal procedures especially regarding traffic and alcohol violations

* Legal rights and responsibilities of citizens:

Read: Information about political issues

Read and write: Voting ballots (for legal residents)

* Procedures for obtaining citizenship (for citizens):

Read: General information

Read and write: Application forms

* Legal rights of undocumented aliens:

Read: General information

Education (English/Spanish):

* For self (English):

Read: Notices

Read and write: Enrollment forms, notices, class work, homework

* For other family members — English/Spanish:

Read: Report cards and notices from school

Read and write: Enrollment forms, helping with homework, report cards

Recreation and leisure (English/Spanish):

* Recreation at home:

Read: Instruction on equipment, games, TV and radio guides, newspapers, magazines, books (fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama)

* Recreation within the community:

Read: Advertisement and programs for community events (concerts, sports events, etc.), information at community facilities (information about the facility itself, events, open hours)

Read and write: Application forms, score keeping, team announcements

Religion (English/Spanish):

Read: Hymns, prayers, religious texts, announcements

Even within a highly technological society only a limited number of individuals engage in such a wide range of literacy tasks. However, the classification provides a comprehensive listing of literacy tasks an individual might encounter within a given domain, such as the work place. Categorization in terms of content areas is not always clear-cut. For example, the income tax withholding form is completed in the workplace and influences one's take-home pay but the task ultimately relates to finances and consumer economics. However, categorizing literacy events by content schemata for completion of literacy tasks is dependent not only upon reading or writing discrete words, but upon some understanding

of the domain of use. Understanding what to do and how it should be done is ultimately related to having some understanding of why things are done the way they are within a given socio-cultural context.

This categorization still has three limitations. The listing does not indicate the importance of the task, but this is difficult to determine for it may vary not only between groups of individuals in a given community, but also from individual to individual, or even for one individual over time. Prioritization will be an issue when a rationale for including functional literacy in ESL instruction is developed in Chapter 3.5.

The second problem is that the list gives no indication of the difficulty of the tasks. Third, such a listing gives no indication as to the text type. However, as the last two issues were addressed by the US Department of Labor assessment of young adult literacy skills, this study will now be examined more closely:

The US Department of Labor Young Adult Literacy Assessment (1986-94) was the first extensive attempt to evaluate functional literacy tasks in terms of text types and proficiency level. As a point of departure, literacy was defined as 'using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential (Kirsch and Jungeblut 1986: 3). This definition rejected an arbitrary standard, such as the ability to write one's name, the completion of a number of years of schooling, or achievement on a standardized reading test as an arbitrary standard which could be used to separate the *literate* from the *illiterate*. It also implied a set of complex information-processing skills that could go beyond decoding and comprehending school-like texts. After classifying the literacy tasks that a young adult might encounter every day into six contexts of use (Chapter 1.3), it was found that written materials within any one category might reflect different structures, each requiring specific literacy skills. This led to the development of three major categories:

Prose literacy: the knowledge and skills associated with understanding and using information from texts such as editorials, newspaper articles, stories, poems, and the like.

Document literacy: the knowledge of skills associated with locating and using information in tables, charts, graphs, maps, indexes, and so forth.

Quantitative literacy: the knowledge and skills associated with performing different arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, using information embedded in both prose and document materials.
(Kirsch et al. 1992: 7)

Such an approach was deemed useful for assessing literacy proficiencies since the focus is upon text types encountered by young adults on a regular basis. Five levels of proficiency were identified for each of the three categories.

Functional literacy prose tasks usually involve expository texts that describe, define, or inform. Such texts may include a diversity of linguistic structures, ranging from texts that are highly organized both topically and visually to ones that are more loosely organized. At a basic level the reader must simply comprehend discrete items of factual information given in the text. At a higher level the reader might have to integrate material

and make inferences by comparing and/or contrasting information given in the text. A reader could also be required to go beyond the text and draw upon schematic knowledge from his own background. Comprehension is also influenced by the length and density of the text.

Document literacy was established as a separate category because an important aspect of being literate in a technologically advancing society is possessing the knowledge and skills needed to process information found in documents rather than prose text (Guthrie et al. 1986). Document literacy requires an individual to locate and use information contained in materials such as forms, tables, schedules, charts, and graphs. The ability to process such materials involves strategies associated with locating information in complex arrays. Successful performance of document literacy tasks may require procedural knowledge associated with transferring and entering information given in one source or document to another, such as in the completion of an application form. Completion of a document literacy task may just require locating information, but often an individual must not only locate but also match features, or even compare and contrast information in adjacent parts of a document and draw on outside knowledge as necessary (Kirsch et al. 1992: 26).

Documents are, of course, not a new phenomenon. The ubiquitous documents of today have a parallel relationship to lists which comprise the bulk of earliest extant written material stemming from the late Assyrian period. These texts consist primarily of administrative and economic documents, which contain information about business and property transactions (Goody 1977: 79, Stubbs 1980: 35). Since the advent of writing, people have been collecting factual information and just as with the ancient lists, modern documents often are not only distinct from prose texts in terms of formatting but often elicit written information in a different way than would be done verbally. Since 2/3 of all literacy tasks involve some form of document processing, the capability of completing such tasks constitutes an important skill in a modern industrialized society (Kirsch et al. 1992: 46). Document processing tasks are often quite complex. For example, the completion of a document not only involves the mechanical skills of writing words and some command of the language but also schematic knowledge of what is actually being requested in the terse language of the genre of documents.

Quantitative literacy goes beyond the ability to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Whereas many individuals can do basic arithmetic operations when the quantities and operations are made explicit, these same operations are more difficult if the relevant data must be extracted from the prose or document, when the operations to be performed are specified in word form, or must be inferred from printed specifications (Kirsch et al. 1992: 58).

The literacy assessment project realized that content-specific knowledge about domains of use, including an understanding of the place of a literacy event within the economic and/or socio-cultural context, was not enough in and of itself. The subsequent

classification of functional literacy tasks was in terms of rhetorical structures, indicating that completion of functional literacy tasks was dependent upon an understanding of the frequently occurring textual characteristics. Recognition of visual aspects of text, including formatting procedures, also provided background schematic knowledge useful in understanding how writing serves specific social functions within a community. Ultimately successful completion of the actual test questions required an understanding of genre or the conventionally accepted uses of language with their own rhetorical conventions associated with content areas (Martin 1985, Swales 1990).

In conclusion, all of the modes of classification of functional literacy tasks discussed in this section have indicated the extensive uses of functional literacy within a highly technological society such as the United States. While none of the modes alone are satisfactory, they can be used in conjunction with each other to form parameters for what will ultimately be subjective decisions about which aspects of functional literacy are most important and/or can be taught to a given population.

3.4. The Context of Literacy

The ESL functional literacy needs and uses of the young adult Mexican immigrant must be assessed in terms of his previous L1 experiences, his present needs, as well as potential future uses.

The functional activities of a rural Mexican family are usually limited both in number and scope. Before emigration most young adult Mexican males live with their parents who commonly perform the family's necessary functional literacy tasks. Consequently, the ESL student probably has little experience with literacy tasks involved in running a household or in interacting with the local bureaucratic infrastructure. Since he probably worked on the land, he neither needed nor developed work place literacy skills.

The student's L1 functional literacy uses probably involved memory aids. However, individuals in predominantly oral cultures, such as many rural Mexican communities, tend to rely heavily upon their memories. The less widely used literacy practices are and the more effort required for writing something (like a grocery list), the more apt an individual is to retain that information in his head. Whereas a more literate individual might frequently jot down notes to himself, a person with more limited literacy will tend to restrict his writing to instances where there is substantial payoff for writing down specific information (like a telephone number). Individuals with limited literacy may also be less apt to use writing as a reinforcement or substitute for oral messages for in their personal interaction with others they will remember the information until meeting the person again or asking an intermediary to pass on an oral message.

The young adult Mexican probably had little need to complete functional literacy tasks in his native country but he is invariably faced with more extensive (potential if not actual) literacy needs and uses after arrival in a more technologically advanced and literate

urban American community (Chapter 1.1). He can still use L1 literacy for his few personal literacy needs, such as writing notes of reminder to himself. His interactional writing uses probably consist mainly of notes to other household members or letters to family back home, all of which can be done in Spanish.

Most household activities can be completed with little English literacy. The young adult male probably has little need to read information on packaged foods or consumer products. As young adults tend to be healthy, he probably has little need to read information on health products.

However, English is needed to complete household literacy tasks requiring interaction with other segments of the community — be it with the bureaucratic infrastructure to pay utility bills or with a landlord to pay rent. Usually the most literate and/or the oldest member of the household handles such literacy tasks involving interaction with the outside world, but with time the young adult immigrant may need to be able to assume such responsibilities.

Other contact with the bureaucratic infrastructure of the society is intentionally limited by undocumented aliens. However, a young adult Mexican immigrant needs some proficiency in document processing and particularly information transfer on documents such as job application forms, driver's license application forms, and so on. The occasional L2 business letter may be required, often to verify in writing something that has been already discussed verbally.

As regards finances, the young immigrant, particularly if he is undocumented, will carry out most transactions in cash. But again, with time he may wish and/or find a way to establish a bank account or get a credit card.⁵ Thus, he could utilize some understanding of the literacy tasks stemming from interaction with financial institutions.

Most entry level manual employment requires little if any literacy, but advancement is almost always contingent upon the ability to read notes with instructions and/or information, write down work orders, take phone messages, and so on.

This overview of probable and potential functional literacy tasks indicates that the young adult Mexican has few L1 functional literacy skills which he can transfer to L2, for he not only lacks schematic knowledge of the content areas, but also familiarity with commonly occurring genres.

Many potential L2 functional literacy tasks — be they in the area of prose literacy, document literacy, and/or numerical literacy — require both receptive and productive uses of language. While document literacy tasks are encountered more frequently, prose literacy tasks are more difficult, particularly if they require productive uses of language. For example, writing a business letter involves functional literacy skills such as understanding what information is necessary and organizing it into the acceptable format of a business letter while graphological skills are utilized in order to express ideas in legible English using accepted standard spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation.

The young Mexican immigrant can initially manage without confronting many L2 literacy tasks but functional literacy in English can be useful in running a household, interacting with the bureaucratic infrastructure, gaining better employment, and integrating into the community. This suggests that a rationale for teaching ESL functional literacy must be considered from both personal and societal perspectives.

3.5. A rationale for teaching functional literacy

The initial discussion of the scope and importance of functional literacy indicated that this term must be considered not only in terms of skills necessary within the context of use, but also in economic terms. Any rationale for teaching functional literacy must also consider both factors. Therefore whether functional literacy should be taught will be considered first, followed by a consideration of what and how.

From the perspective of the sending country, Mexico has a higher literacy rate than many Third World countries, but there is a close correlation between rural poverty and limited literacy. Most Mexicans growing up in poor rural parts of the country have had few educational opportunities and consequently have low L1 literacy. Because of limited opportunities for job training or employment outside of subsistence farming, many young adults have developed few job skills beyond the ability and willingness to do manual labor (Ferreiro 1994). Therefore, limited L1 functional literacy is a decisive motivating factor in emigration.

From the perspective of the receiving country, functional literacy can be considered in terms of employment, the socio-cultural context, and intergenerational literacy. Beginning with employment, when the young Mexican immigrates to the United States, he finds that entry level manual labor jobs pay more than in Mexico but he will remain at the bottom of the employment ladder and receive minimum wage unless he acquires job skills and English functional literacy. As a command of English is usually the prerequisite for any job training, ESL functional literacy is basic to improving his lot from an economic perspective.

There has been little research into the benefits of L1 functional literacy instruction for adults in developing countries or L2 instruction for limited literacy adults immigrating to highly technological societies (Wagner 1992:57). However, the extensive assessment of the functional literacy levels of young adults commissioned by the US Department of Labor has revealed close correlations between literacy levels, job training, occupations, and salaries (Kirsch et al. 1992). In a highly technological society such as the United States, success in job training (either in formal programs or on the job) is usually dependent upon literacy skills. Individuals who do complete job training without increasing their literacy skills may have difficulty with future employment and/or occupational mobility because of projected increases in literacy skill requirements. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the fastest growing occupations will involve technicians and professional workers, followed closely by managers or administrators. Jobs as skilled laborers and

operatives are projected to have a growth rate of only 1/8 that of the professional and technical workers (Kirsch et al. 1992). The least literate will continue to find employment if they are hard working and motivated but will continue to earn low wages. It could be argued that investment in ESL functional literacy instruction is to the benefit not only of the immigrant, but also to the economic infrastructure.

From a socio-economic perspective, English functional literacy skills facilitate interaction with the bureaucratic infrastructure of the society. The amount of functional literacy used by individuals is influenced by their literacy proficiency, socio-cultural factors (Heath 1983), as well as gender, age, immigration status, and roles within the family, the work place, and the community (García and Durán 1991, Guerra 1991, Rockhill 1993, Weinstein-Shr 1993). While ESL functional literacy facilitates some measure of assimilation into the L2 society, lack thereof invariably leads to some disenfranchisement when the Mexican immigrant is linguistically alienated from a highly literate culture in which the dominant language is English.

From an intergenerational perspective, limited functional literacy skills have an influence not only upon individuals themselves, but also upon their children. The Department of Labor assessment of intergenerational aspects of low literacy concluded that parental education, economic situation, and early home literacy experiences all ultimately affected the young adult's functional literacy level (Kirsch et al. 1992). The rationale for teaching functional ESL literacy thus also has an intergenerational aspect. The United States mandates free public school education for all children, including the increasingly large number of limited English speaking pupils. A payoff for the significant financial investment in the education of these children is to some degree contingent upon improving the L2 functional literacy skills of the parents.

The economic rationale for providing ESL functional literacy instruction rests not so much on enabling the young Mexican immigrant to find gainful employment for he probably works already. Rather, increased L2 functional literacy may facilitate wider employment opportunities. From a societal perspective, more effective interaction with the bureaucratic infrastructure, assimilation into the community, and increased intergenerational literacy are valuable as well.

Even if functional literacy can be shown to be of benefit to the individual and society, the question remains as to what should be taught and how. While it was much easier to define graphological literacy in terms of discrete mechanical skills and to discuss possible approaches, the previous discussion has provided some insights into developing a rationale for teaching functional literacy. The question remains as to what the focus of functional literacy instruction should be, for a hierarchical sequencing of functional literacy tasks is difficult considering the many distinct perspectives including content, purpose, text type, and frequency of occurrence. If syllabus design is to be responsive to the needs of a given group of students, then it would appear that the teacher/researcher will have to combine her knowledge of each student's present and potential literacy needs and uses with

her evaluation as to which skills and information will have the most immediate and long-term payoff. All this will ultimately have to be reviewed in light of institutional mandates and constraints when a syllabus is designed for the target population.

However, a few preliminary observations can be made. Most functional literacy tasks involve a combination of reading and writing. Frequency of use not only of literacy task, but also of discrete items, is worthy of consideration because there can be a real payoff in guiding students to do certain simple written tasks correctly. For example, in standard English the street names and months are capitalized, whereas in Spanish they are not. Second, in Southern California saints' names are frequently used for place and street names so it is helpful that the student learn to write *Santa Barbara*, rather than using the Mexican abbreviation of *Sta. Barbara*. Third, in America one's surname is one's father's name, whereas in Mexico one writes one's father's name followed by one's mother's or at least her first initial. These three examples show how teaching the correct form for frequently occurring items can be very useful in *making a literate impression* by understanding and applying the society's norms. Such information can be incorporated in a lesson on filling out application forms for once a student has learned how to do this correctly on one form, if he keeps it, he can transfer information in pencil to any new application form, making erasures as needed, and then photocopy the form before handing it in, so that it looks as though it were done in ink.

Genre should be considered too. For example, all utility bills contain similar information: name, address and phone number of the company and client, reading and billing dates, bill of previous month and present month including any outstanding amounts, final date for payment, rates of assessment, and so on. Learning the vocabulary used and the visual placement of such items facilitate reading and paying bills. Understanding assessment rates can be very important, especially if cost per unit rises greatly once the base line has been exceeded. Understanding the differences between telephone long distance carriers and their various rates and plans is usually of high interest and can be of financial benefit to the students for most limited literacy individuals prefer phoning to writing and often have high phone bills. There is a payoff in having such procedural knowledge because utility bills have to be paid monthly as long as one lives in the United States.

Some texts, such as pay stubs, are received once or twice a month and require no action, but it is useful to understand the information given. The specialized vocabulary (such as *net pay year to date*) rarely occurs in spoken language; words that are abbreviated (such as *SDI* for *state disability income*) are even more difficult to understand.

Finally, some functional literacy tasks may occur very infrequently but are still worthy of consideration within a curriculum. While only citizens can vote, immigrants should understand what is involved if they ever become citizens or if they go home where they can vote. Income tax forms have to be filled out annually if one is employed and it is necessary to understand what is involved.

These examples provide possible ways to prioritize items for inclusion in a syllabus, yet there is obviously no *right* way and decisions will have to be made with reference to the needs of a specific group of students.

3.6. Conclusion

When people refer to literacy they often mean functional literacy, conceiving of it as an entity in and of itself, whose parameters are clearly understood and accepted by all. If functional literacy enables an individual to 'do things with words to achieve effects and to use literacy to communicate successfully with people in particular contexts', an immigrant from a rural area of an underdeveloped country needs a basic understanding not just of how to fill in the dotted lines on a form, but an understanding of how things are done in a highly technological society. Therefore, the ESL student requires not only a basic command of graphological literacy but also schematic knowledge of the world in which he finds himself and an understanding of the genres of functional literacy tasks he is likely to encounter in the daily round.

Functional literacy could be defined as the ability to read and write using an adequate command of knowledge of the language system, paralanguage, and rhetoric as manifest in writing in order to communicate on matters concerning oneself, one's family and household needs, one's job, and one's role as a member of a community. Gray's contention that functional literacy 'makes it possible for . . . [an individual] to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development' (cited by Oxenham 1982: 87) is almost a normative statement, suggesting and implying that this would be a worthwhile goal should the person use his functional literacy skills. However, there is nothing within the concept of functional literacy itself that suggests the goal to be appropriate. Rather the UNESCO definition seems to express a feeling prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s that a literate populace would be a boon to newly emerging and developing nations. One cannot simply assume that literacy will be used for good and noble ends. An ESL student needs to understand not only how a functional task might be completed, but also whether this would be appropriate and what other alternatives for action might exist. This must be discussed next with reference to the Literacy of Thoughtfulness.

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- 1 While numeracy is obviously an important component of literacy, it will not be discussed extensively in the present study as numeracy was not part of the adult education ESL literacy curriculum in the research setting.
 - 2 The personal critical and creative uses of literacy will be discussed in Chapter 4.

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- 3 Not all of Heath's reading activities are functional in the straight transactional sense. The fact that this whole section moves beyond functional literacy indicates that there is another aspect of literacy, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 as the literacy of thoughtfulness.
 - 4 In the late 1980s the Educational Testing Service, under contract with the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, assessed the literacy levels of a cross-section of 5,778 young American adults seeking job training and/or employment (Kirsch and Jungeblut 1992, Kirsch et al. 1992, Kirsch et al. 1993).
 - 5 To open a bank account or get a credit card in the United States it is necessary to have a social security number, which may only issued to a citizen or a legal resident.

Chapter 4: The Literacy of Thoughtfulness

4.1. Introduction

While graphological literacy shows how to transfer graphemes to phonemes and functional literacy enables a person to read and write what he needs to within the daily round, it will be argued that the literacy of thoughtfulness can empower an individual to consider why something was or should be read or written and what the implications might be.

Traditionally the main focus in adult education ESL has been on the graphological and functional dimensions of literacy, whereas critical thinking, *explication de texte*, and creativity have more often been the objectives in higher education. The first contemporary educator to incorporate strongly the *why* of literacy into adult basic education was Freire, who conceived of the concept of *conscientização* when working with poor adult illiterates in Brazil (1973). *Conscientização* provides a point of departure for a consideration of the literacy of thoughtfulness with its major divisions of critical thinking, creativity, and an interrelated ethical dimension of concern for others (Brown 1991). The focus of this concept will less on literacy per se and more on how students with limited L1/L2 literacy, but adequate L2 oral communicative competence, can utilize literacy and orality together in a thoughtful contemplation of issues and ideas.

A rationale for teaching any aspect of literacy is dependent upon a consideration of its benefits. While the effects of functional literacy were considered more in socio-economic terms, the literacy of thoughtfulness can benefit the young adult Mexican immigrant in terms of personal empowerment by enabling him to think more critically and creatively about issues of import to him in his daily life. The literacy of thoughtfulness may not insure success, but it has potential benefits in employment, cross-cultural understanding, personal growth, and empowerment. There is also a concomitant societal benefit to a participatory democracy such as the United States which is based upon having a thoughtful and educated populace.

4.2. The scope and importance of the literacy of thoughtfulness

Everyone faces multifaceted problems which cannot be easily resolved using simple factual information. In order to decide how to act, an individual draws on his philosophy of life, regardless of how ill-defined:

As a result of our experience, each of us has 'implicit theories' about the world and the way in which it functions. Implicit theories are the unexamined or unconscious world Together they constitute our belief system and our personal perspective. Implicit theories become the lens and filter for everyday experience, dictating what one sees and how one interprets it. (Yinger 1980: 16)

True learning, or what Habermas (1972) has called *emancipatory learning*, can help free an individual from personal, institutional, or environmental forces which prevent him from seeing new directions or from gaining control of his life, his society, and his world. This process includes understanding and resolving contradictions which inevitably arise in the workplace, one's personal life, and the society (and perhaps even more so in the life of an immigrant). If change is a fundamental reality, then forms and structures are temporary, relationships undergo development, and everyone is in a constant process of restructuring and visualizing his world. If an individual believes in change rather than stasis, then he must develop thinking which looks for, recognizes, and welcomes contradictions as a stimulus to development (Deshler 1985: 6). This requires an internal examination and exploration of issues in order to clarify concepts and/or create new meanings for concepts. The resulting conceptual perspective may lead not only to modified assumptions about oneself and the world, but also to changes in one's behavior.

What role does literacy play in this process? If words are necessary to articulate thoughts and give them coherence and meaning (Keller 1908), then literacy enables a person to write down and organize his thoughts for present purposes and/or future reflection. Literacy makes it possible for an individual to consider the thoughts of others, not just in the fleeting moment in which they are spoken and understood or as later remembered, but also when reread in the future. In this sense literacy enables a person to reflect upon ideas which often could be expressed orally. But because of the more permanent nature of the written form and its availability for critique, written text can help individuals develop a literacy of thoughtfulness. Therefore, a literate person not only needs the graphological ability to put words onto paper or the functional ability to read and write enough to negotiate written factual information, but he can expand his ability to ponder and consider ideas:

. . .reading has to do with political and personal empowerment; it gives me the power to transform myself, to move inside and outside of minds and worlds that exist by virtue of the printed text. (Courts 1991: xxi)

Furthermore, 'Reading, writing, speaking, listening, visualizing — genuine literacy has a single primary purpose: meaning making' (Courts 1991: xxvii). Making meaning implies thought and reflection.

Language so used extends beyond functional literacy which, although valuable in and of itself, severely limits the notion of what full literacy is and can be. A new term gaining some popularity is *critical literacy*:

What is needed to meet the crisis of literacy is a critical literacy that frames reading and writing in terms of moral and political decision-making. Literacy in this view is not linked to learning to read advertisements and becoming better consumers, or escaping into the pages of romance novels or spy thrillers; critical literacy links language competency to acquiring analytical skills which empower individuals to challenge the status quo. (McLaren 1986: 158)

Critical literacy cannot always be equated with the power to challenge the status quo in all respects for obviously any individual (and particularly an undocumented alien) often faces limitations of expression, even if self-imposed. Nevertheless, understanding the cultural, political, and socio-economic facets of one's society is linked to empowerment.

Freire advocates the process of adult literacy as cultural action for freedom, education, and *conscientização*. In this sense, empowerment through literacy can be seen as a meaningful goal for the illiterate and often disenfranchised people of the world such as the poor Brazilians whom he taught. For Freire critical literacy encompasses more than simply the skills involved in reading and writing, for to 'reduce adult literacy learning to a purely technical action' would be a naive approach 'incapable of perceiving that technique itself as an instrument of men in their orientation in the world is not neutral' (Freire 1970: 206). Literacy is a creative activity providing a means of analyzing and interpreting one's own experiences, making connections with the experiences of others, and thus expanding one's consciousness and understanding of oneself and others:

The process of men's orientation in the world . . . involves, above all, thought-language; that is, the possibility of the act of knowing through his praxis, by which man transforms reality. For man, this process of orientation in the world can be understood neither as a purely subjective event, nor as an objective or mechanistic one, but only as an event in which subjectivity and objectivity are united. Orientation in the world, so understood, places the question of the purposes of action at the level of critical perception of reality. (Freire 1970: 206)

For Freire, an individual's actions reflect his orientation to the world. But 'the action of men without objectives, whether the objectives are right or wrong, mythical or demythologized, naive or critical, is not praxis' (Freire 1970: 206). Praxis here implies an interrelation of the awareness of the aim and the process as the basis for planning action, which in turn involves methods, objectives, and value options. The result can be a principled solution of practical problems which according to Freire cannot be separated from an ideological stance.

Freire criticizes literacy approaches which focus solely upon the mechanics of literacy. Phonics sentences used to teach grapheme-phoneme relationships, such as *A asa é da ave* ('The wing is of the bird' from a Laubach text), are 'deprived of their authentic dimension as thought-language in dynamic interplay with reality. Thus impoverished, they are not authentic expressions of the world' (Freire 1970: 210) and lack pragmatic meaning in the world. Although phonics are basic to Freire's initial literacy instruction, he believes that mechanistic devices used to teach skills through information storing should not be considered as ends in and of themselves. Rather phonics and similar skills should be presented through texts which promote an understanding of man, his culture, and his relationships — thus enabling *conscientização*.

Since literacy requires tuition, how literacy is taught will influence the extent to which the potential of literacy can be realized. Freire believes there are two basic alternatives in adult education. In 'the banking approach to adult education' the teacher

deposits into the students' minds information which they receive, memorize and repeat. The difficulty with this approach is that it never proposes students consider reality critically. In contrast 'problem-posing education' regards dialogue as an indispensable part of helping students become critical thinkers:

In problem-posing education, men develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Freire 1973: 56)

In this sense education stimulates true reflection and consequently action upon reality, affirming people as beings in the dialectical process of becoming: 'Education is thus constantly remade in praxis. In order to *be*, it must *become*' (Freire 1973: 57).

Learning *content* is identified with the learning *process* so that the result is not just a mechanical process of learning a skill, but a process of utilizing the interior world of the self to act upon and interact with the exterior structures of the world through the processes of reading and writing. Language provides the tools for making meaning in the world through a dynamic process:

Oral and written surface structures are external signifiers of this meaning-making act, and these surface structures are generated by language, which is itself a rule-governed structure of meaning making. But it is the nature of language to be self-contradictory because the rule-governed structure is like an unstable chemical element — constantly acting and reacting, constantly changing from what it was to what it was not. (Courts 1991: 7)

Stasis is never the desired objective once one moves in literacy instruction beyond graphological and functional literacy and involves the thinking principle.

The use of language as a meaning-making act involves constant change, evolving as it develops, and being subjected to new meanings in the process. Freire envisions true education in this sense:

Dialogue and problem-posing never lull anyone to sleep. Dialogue awakens an awareness. Within dialogue and problem-posing educator-educatee and educatee-educator go forward together to develop a critical attitude. The result of this is the perception of the interplay of knowledge and all its adjuncts. This knowledge reflects the world; reflects human beings in and with the world explaining the world. Even more important it reflects having to justify their transformation of the world. . . . To reject problem-posing dialogue at any level is to maintain an unjustifiable pessimism towards human beings and to life. (Freire 1973: 111)

Learning and wisdom are not solely in the domain of the literate, for one can also make sense of the world through speaking and listening. However, in many traditional cultures the literal translation of the word *literacy* implies knowledge and wisdom, such as in the Zimbabwean language of Shona, where *literacy* means *he who is wise* — an acknowledgment of the potential of literacy in its broadest sense.

The idea of empowerment in critical literacy involves a deeper understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge. According to Foucault, what is needed is not simply understanding the two terms, but perceiving the ways in which power affects the process of knowing:

Power is not to be taken as a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others power is not that which makes the difference between those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or pieces of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault 1980: 98)

In this sense literacy and power are not something *out there*, but rather part of the individual himself. The possibility of making meaning through language in written form can be central to a person's empowerment. While an individual could simply be subject to the structures and activities of an indifferent societal system, literacy can enhance his ability to interact with and participate in the creation of the society in which he lives. Thinking augmented with reading and writing can become central to the processes of becoming and knowing.

Some ESL educators might consider such an approach to be idealistic at best, unrealistic at worst. But the dynamic interrelationship between theoretical structures of a society and life can become part of a curriculum if the teacher sees beyond graphological and functional literacy and gives the act of reading and writing value, worth, and significance in and of itself, so that 'learning *content*' is identified with 'the learning *process*' (Freire 1973: 209).

Thinking critically and creatively involves caring not only for oneself, but keeping in mind the common good, in what has been named the literacy of thoughtfulness:

. . . [this] goes beyond basic skills and includes enhanced abilities to think critically and creatively, to reason carefully, to inquire systematically into any important matter; to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and arguments; and to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences in a variety of forms. We have come to call it a literacy of thoughtfulness, since it involves both the exercise of thought and a certain amount of caring about other thinkers in past and present communities. (Brown 1991: ix)

Brown's two major and interrelated components are critical and creative thinking, both of which contain the ethical component of understanding and taking into consideration the viewpoints of others.

4.3. Critical thinking and critical language awareness

A few educators may speak of critical thinking as though it were a new concept, but critical thinking has been an aspect of literacy since the advent of writing. Some of the earliest extant texts are Mesopotamian cuneiform lists of commercial encounters (Goody 1977: 80, Stubbs 1980: 35). Businessmen undoubtedly used such lists not only to keep track of their transactions, but also to contemplate how ventures were faring and what should be done next. Another genre of early texts were religious in nature. Words of the great teachers, followed by written exegesis, became the basis of religious scholarship.

Actually the term *explication de texte*, commonly used in literacy criticism today, comes from the Latin *explicare* where *unfolding* originally meant unrolling (and by implication reading) a whole religious scroll in order to explain its meaning.

The recent emphasis upon critical thinking in America (and elsewhere) stems in part from the realization that although the country has a mandatory minimum school-leaving age of sixteen, educational assessment has indicated that not all students who have theoretically mastered initial literacy skills have 'learned the problem-solving strategies and critical thinking skills by which to look for evidence to support their interpretations and judgments' (Petrosky 1982: 16). But what is critical thinking?

On the surface at least, perhaps the most notable characteristic of critical thought is that it involves a certain skepticism, or suspension of assent, towards a given statement, established norm or mode of doing things. This skepticism might ultimately give way to acceptance, but it does not take truth for granted. Instead, it considers alternative hypotheses and possibilities. Such thought might result in the detection of a fallacy, but it might equally well prompt a decision not to apply a perfectly well-established rule, principle or procedure to a given instance. Indeed, the solution of many difficult problems often requires just that. In part, critical thinking involves seeing when a certain common procedure is fruitless by entertaining alternatives to it. (McPeck 1981: 6)

If critical thinking involves judicious use of skepticism combined with knowledge gained from past experience, it would seem crucial not only to ask questions, but also to know when to question and what kind of questions to ask.

People in all walks of life value critical thinking skills in one form or another. Critical thinking, like reading and writing, is content dependent insofar as an individual always reads, writes, or thinks about something. People use specific dispositions and skills, such as analyzing arguments carefully and/or seeing other points of view, in order to reach sound conclusions. The criteria for skepticism are supplied by the norms and standards of the field under consideration. Therefore, being a critical thinker in one discipline does not necessarily enable a person to be a critical thinker in another area. For example, most academic writing is a learned genre based upon historical academic traditions, which often focus more upon critical thinking and assume as a prerequisite the mastery of a certain amount of subject matter in a given field. Chemists value the ability to draw sound inferences from observations, to analyze and to evaluate previous research critically, and to generate new questions or experiments. In contrast, English professors involved in literary criticism value the ability to understand, analyze and evaluate arguments, to support general assertions with details, and to recognize the central thesis of a work. Inability to synthesize ideas, unquestioning acceptance of assumptions, or reliance on narration or description when analysis is appropriate could occur in both fields, but would manifest differently.

Through L2 *explication de texte* a student can become more sensitive to language as a way of expressing what happens to people in their lives, including not only their ideas, but also their emotions and the physical events that shape their environment. At the same

time the student can become attuned to how the conventions of narration in a novel might affect the words written by the author or how poetic meter alters language in certain ways so that it is no longer the same when it has passed through poetic form. The student might not only consider the ideas and the form in which they are expressed, but in reading refer back to his own experience, considering whether the ideas presented would make sense if someone were in a similar situation. Often implicit in *explication de texte* is a method by which a text can be read critically. University students^{are} generally considered to be *literate* only if they can perform at this level.

Critical thinking in L2 language instruction is often equated with *explication de texte* as taught in institutions of higher learning. A presumed requisite level of L1 education, literacy, and leisure reading are prevalent among the educated élite in most countries, but these are beyond that of most limited literacy adult ESL immigrants. The latter lack the L2 literacy skills needed for sophisticated *explication de texte* as well as the educational, linguistic, and cultural background which are usually considered necessary for reading and writing extensively for necessity and/or personal enjoyment.

Considering critical thinking or critical literacy only in this academic way is limiting in that the majority of students in ESL adult basic education may never attain high levels of literacy or extensive academic proficiency in any field. However, learning how to use a combination of orality and literacy can help them build a conceptual framework for critical thinking, which can be used in resolving problems encountered in daily life. The concept of critical thinking is also important for adults outside of traditional institutions of higher learning, and it is argued that activities involving critical thinking should not be restricted to the academic classroom or essay:

Thinking critically — reflecting on the assumptions underlying our and others' ideas and actions, and contemplating alternative ways of thinking and living — is one of the important ways in which we become adults. When we think critically, we come to our judgments, choices and decisions for ourselves, instead of letting others do this on our behalf. We refuse to relinquish the responsibility for making the choices that determine our individual and collective futures to those who presume to know what is in our own best interests. We become actively engaged in creating our personal and social worlds. In short, we take the reality of democracy seriously. (Brookfield 1987: ix-x)

Here critical thinking is seen as a productive and positive activity through which one tries to identify the assumptions that underlie those ideas, beliefs, values, and actions that members of a society may take for granted. Once assumptions are identified, they can be examined for accuracy and validity in context. In this sense practices, structures, and actions are never context-free, for it is within existing schemata that critical thinkers try to imagine and explore alternatives to existing ways of thinking and living. Furthermore, such thinking is not always simply a rational, cognitive activity, but can also have an emotional component when one realizes that he does not have all the answers to life's problems.

Critical thinking also enables an individual to question the validity of the norms, values, and beliefs with which he was brought up. In the process of questioning and

reappraising existing structures and searching for new possibilities in himself and the world, and then seeking to make modifications as needed, an individual need no longer be culturally bound but can become more perceptive about culture (or cultures in the case of immigrants). When people develop critical thinking, 'they have the necessary tools and skills to make sense of the social relations, material conditions, and cultural milieus in which they exist and their relationship to the wider society and dominant rationality' (Kretovics 1985: 56).

For example, not all texts are written for the direct transfer of factual information between two interlocutors and most writing is not ideologically neutral. Facts can be presented in such a way so as to influence the reader one way or another (Huff 1954). Non-factual text can be written to persuade, convince, mollify, and so on. For this reason education should include giving students practice in analyzing genres that will impinge upon their lives :

The ideological contents of the various forms, genre, of writing should become the subject of overt discussion and direct teaching. In this way it could be that all school-learners would gain some insight into the meanings of their own and other's writing, to understand the content of the messages to which they are subjected, and to provide them with the essential skills necessary to manipulate, control, and organize language for their *own* purposes. (Kress 1982: 13)

For example, advertising is one genre of text that limited literacy adults encounter, for they see advertisements on billboards, in magazines, and on television. Just as one can lie with statistics, one can be selective about what ideas to present in advertising and how to do so most effectively.

Fairclough argues that critical language study in educational institutions should be a significant objective of language education, for in the age of print individuals may not be physically coerced, but may be unconsciously influenced by media messages which at some level seek ideological consent (1989: 233). Advertising discourse attempts to build a positive ideological relationship between the advertiser and consumer, to develop a positive image of the product being advertised, and then to generate perceived need on the part of the consumer (Fairclough 1989: 202-3). Critical consciousness of such a genre is important, for everyone is the target of advertising. Functional literacy tasks may try to involve the student as a potential consumer, but an analysis of advertising empowers the student to become a critical and thoughtful consumer. Lessons incorporating authentic advertisements as texts can involve specific problem-solving activities with a reasoning component in Prabhu's sense (1987). While a lesson might include only a short text, understanding the thrust of such an advertisement can require critical thinking on the part of the students.

The genre of advertising need not only be equated with consumerism. For example, American political campaigns last for much longer periods than in Britain and involve extensive paid advertising. In Freire's sense of *conscientização* the poor, illiterate, and disenfranchised will only gain a voice when they understand and become involved in the

political process. Yet voting is an activity foreign to many Mexican ESL students, for although they grew up in a nominal democracy, the ruling party has been in power for 65 years due in part to election fraud. Consequently, many Mexicans have never felt that voting will lead to empowerment. Lessons on the American electoral process can help these students understand the importance of voting in a participatory democracy.

Such lessons might seem to approach Fairclough's goal of empowering students to 'deal with communicative situations outside the classroom in which institutional power is weighted against them' (1989: 235). However, it is not realistic to assume that a teacher can prepare those ESL students who are undocumented aliens always 'to challenge, contradict, assert, in settings where the power dynamic would expect them to agree, acquiesce, [and] be silent' (1989: 235), for such students must be prudent about when and/or where they challenge authority. ESL students can learn to analyze text critically, not only for the purposes of present (perhaps hypothetical) action, but also in order to consider how they might respond to related situations either here or in their native country. In this sense critical thinking is not just limited to critical language awareness and present response to various genres of written text, but critical language awareness can help students understand ways of thinking issues through in the future.

Traditionally critical thinking, critical language awareness, and *explication de texte* have often been connected solely with textual analysis. However, attempts have been made to develop a more expansive concept of critical literacy going beyond the text to include oral as well as written uses of language:

Critical Literacy. Analytic habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, or discussing which go beneath surface impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions, and routine clichés; understanding the social contexts and consequences of any subject matter; discovering the deep meaning of any event, text, technique, process, object, statement, image, or situation; applying that meaning to your own context. (Shor 1993: 32)

While Shor does not indicate the comparative import he would give to each of the five 'analytic habits', his definition could be read to indicate that critical literacy is not just within the domain of the highly literate, but can also be within the sphere of limited literacy individuals, who could incorporate their stronger oral communicative skills with their critical mental capacities to consider an issue. This perspective suggests that critical thinking and literacy need not be exclusively dependent upon, but may in some instances may be only partially sustained by reading of texts (Lankshear 1994: 10).

This broader conception of critical literacy seems to indicate the importance of analytic cognitive ability induced by literacy. While such an interpretation could be open to some dispute, writing is a way of thinking on paper. As indicated earlier, those Mesopotamian cuneiform lists contained information about completed business transactions that could simply be viewed as factual texts. However, these lists may also have been utilized by the businessman to remind him of what he had done and to clarify his own thinking as to what he should do next. While an important purpose of written text is to

communicate with others, another (and preceding) use of writing is for the author to clarify his thoughts by what Howard calls 'thinking on paper':

The idea is to learn to write primarily for your own edification and only then for the eyes of others. The aim is to use writing to become more intelligible to yourself — to find your meaning — as well as to communicate with others — to be found out. (1990: 85)

Writing is often considered to be primarily for communication. Howard posits that while communication is an important objective of writing, but not the only one nor the first. He claims that the goal of writing, like reading, 'is to *understand* and then to make that understanding *available* to others. In other words, the first use of writing is to think *with* — to articulate ideas — and by reshaping those thoughts on paper, to communicate them' (Howard 1990: 84). From this perspective writing serves understanding first and communication second.

Considering critical thinking and critical literacy from the perspectives of Shor, Lankshear, and Howard has important ramifications for those involved in teaching ESL. Critical language awareness projects in ESL (e.g. Wallace 1992) usually assume students can independently read text. However, the target population of adult Mexican ESL students have been placed at the intermediate level because of their L2 oral communicative competence. A few students can read a simple teacher-generated text alone but most can only follow along a *choral reading* [the teacher reading a phrase at a time and the class repeating in unison afterwards]. Given the generally accepted definitions of critical literacy or critical language awareness, these students cannot read well enough to analyze any text. However, lessons could be designed that utilized the students' higher L2 oral communicative competence to discuss ideas presented in simple texts or in checklists (see Chapter 4.4). Individual students may not always be able to read, analyze, or complete literacy tasks alone. However, small groups of students or the whole class can use a combination of orality and literacy to consider texts with the aim of fostering critical thinking and literacy. Traditionally, critical language awareness and *explication de texte* have been associated with the instruction of more literate and sophisticated students but this does not mean that the literacy of thoughtfulness cannot be implemented on a more modest level. If critical thinking and critical literacy involve 'thinking on paper' (Howard 1990: 84) or 'thinking with paper', then this aspect of literacy is within the range of individuals with emergent literacy.

Yet is critical thinking and/or literacy enough? Advocates of critical thinking are not without their critics. De Bono, for example, argues that schools often teach only limited thinking skills involving information sorting and analysis. Furthermore, even the academic emphasis on critical thinking has serious limitations:

Where it breaks down is in the assumption that perceptions and values are common, universal, permanent, or even agreed. Central to this type of thinking is the underlying notion of 'truth'. By means of argument which manoeuvres matters into a contradictory position, something can be shown to be false. (De Bono 1991: 5-6)

De Bono's basic criticism of critical thinking (and particularly formal logic) is that it is often erroneously considered to be synonymous with effective thinking. Yet traditional systems of logic depend upon polarization, categorization, and dichotomies which are even reflected in contemporary language, when individuals use the words (which are also the title of one of De Bono's books), I Am Right, You Are Wrong (1990).

The type of formal logic evident in academic disciplines requires all relevant information be available, but most real life problems lack clear-cut dichotomies such as the right or wrong thing to do. Furthermore, logic cannot introduce new ideas, pose alternatives, or cope with unexpected situations. Therefore De Bono contends that 'critical thinking lacks the productive, generative, creative and design elements that are so needed to tackle problems and find our way forward' (1991: 6). If critical thinking is defined in a narrow academic sense, criticism thereof is well founded, for one could develop subject-specific skills of analysis at the expense of thinking more broadly, or in De Bono's sense, more creatively. Critical thinking may involve exploring a situation, a phenomenon, a question, or a problem (in the case of literacy instruction often presented in the form of a written genre). However, evaluating available information in order to arrive at a hypothesis or conclusion (particularly with complex problems with multiple interrelated causes) may require more than convergent linear thinking:

Traditional thinking puts all the emphasis on critical thinking, argument, analysis and logic. These are very important But these are only a part of thinking and it is very dangerous to assume they are sufficient. In addition to critical thinking we need thinking that is constructive and creative. In addition to argument we need exploration of the subject. In addition to analysis we need the skills of design. In addition to logic we need perception. (De Bono 1992: 20)

This is second aspect of the literacy of thoughtfulness — creative thinking.

4.4. Creative thinking as part of the literacy of thoughtfulness

When people speak of creativity with regard to literacy, they usually think of creative writing. Yet it is possible to emphasize more modest creative uses of writing to stimulate thought, for the stress of the literacy of thoughtfulness is how the *thought* part manifests — critically, creatively, and compassionately. There are similarities as well as differences between critical and creative thinking. Critical thinking tends to involve more convergent, sequential, linear modes of reasoning and problem solving.

On the other hand, creative thinking is often more field-independent, lateral, holistic, and divergent. Field independent thinkers are said to possess 'a highly developed capacity for cognitive restructuring and can impose their own structures on a field, or, within a field, construct alternative structures' (Henderson 1994: 34). Such *lateral thinkers*, to use a term coined by De Bono, reject sequential, linear modes of reasoning and problem solving (De Bono 1990). These individuals can often 'work on several ideas at once,

advancing and testing *multiple predicate* hypotheses' (Henderson 1984: 39) and they can 'acquire concepts by a flash of insight after a number of trials' (Henderson 1984: 35). Such divergent thinkers have an aptitude in problem solving for generating alternative perspectives on problems rather than following predefined, standardized formats (Guilford 1956). They are also strong in what has been called innovative or anticipatory learning, which involves the ability to prepare for possible contingencies and to consider future alternatives.

In our rapidly changing world the 'people of tomorrow' must be open to new experiences and new ways of seeing, to new ideas and unfamiliar concepts. They 'are keenly aware that the one certainty of life is change — that they are always in process, always changing. They welcome this risk-taking way of being and are vitally alive in the way they face change' (Rogers 1980: 351). Recent statistics show that the average American will change jobs seven times in his lifetime, outward confirmation of what Rogers considered to be the trend of the future. De Bono reiterated Rogers' perception:

The future well-being of the world is going to require good thinking. Personal life has always required good thinking but in the future the increasing complexity of demands and opportunities will require even better [creative] thinking. (1992: 2)

Individuals have different innate tendencies toward convergence or divergence. Proponents of critical thinking claim that although individuals vary in their capacity to think critically, everyone can be taught to think more effectively. Some educators argue that schools tend to socialize students too much toward convergent thinking while failing to foster creative thinking. De Bono believes that creative thinking can be taught — it is just that people have not tried to do so: 'Intelligence is a potential. Thinking is the skill with which we use that potential.' (1992: 3). De Bono favors *lateral thinking*, which cuts across patterns instead of moving up and down through them in a more *logical* linear sequence. The ability to see pattern formation, pattern asymmetry, and pattern switching is a significant trait of lateral thinkers. This kind of creative thinking is also the basis of humor.

De Bono contends that most people do *table top* thinking, considering only what is before them. While some scientific experiments might focus upon a given number of known variables, real life problems are rarely so simple or easy — there are usually numerous factors, known and unknown, over which one may not have control. The creative process of seeing beyond the obvious involves asking questions, often initially simply by throwing out questions (without even knowing what the right questions to ask might be) or listing alternatives. This process can lead to new insight if done with persistence. While the focus here is upon thinking, De Bono suggests doing exercises by *writing down* alternatives, variables, and so on. This parallels Howard's earlier contention that writing can help an individual to think on paper.

De Bono's assertion that creative thinking is what people need to make complex decisions in their daily lives is similar to Brookfield's central thesis (1987) that adults can be challenged to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting in order to make

connections between their private lives and broader social forces. Brookfield summarizes the commonalities that exist in various conceptualizations of creative thinkers as follows:

1. Creative thinkers reject standardized formats for problem solving.
2. They have interests in a wide range of related and divergent fields.
3. They can take multiple perspectives on a problem.
4. They view the world as relative and contextual rather than universal and absolute.
5. They frequently use trial-and-error methods in their experimentation with alternative approaches.
6. They have a future orientation; change is embraced optimistically as a valuable developmental possibility.
7. They have self-confidence and trust in their own judgment. (Brookfield 1987: 116)

Such character traits have, however, been criticized as being too generalized to be taught.

De Bono has been criticized for assuming 'that thinking is a generalized skill . . . [but] he actually promotes a particular or specific type of thinking that differs considerably from what most people, and certainly educators, usually mean by thinking' (McPeck 1981: 103). It is understandable that an academic might become distressed by what could be seen as a dismissal of developing subject specific knowledge and skills. However, while De Bono understands the value of traditional ways of critical thinking particularly within academic disciplines, he contends that innovative connections are made through lateral thinking — connections often only obvious in retrospect (1991: 51). De Bono's theories have been supported by leading scientists including Nobel Laureates who affirm that while 'Every valuable idea must always be logical in hindsight . . . the progress of real science that precedes the papers depends on hunches, accidents, imagination and luck' (De Bono 1991: x).

De Bono's ideas can be incorporated into ESL literacy instruction to provide ways of thinking creatively about issues. When an ESL student is faced with a problem, he might just mull it over in his mind. On the other hand, he can learn to consider alternatives in a creative way, making notes of alternatives generated through brain-storming — notes which can be referred to in the ultimate decision-making process. The student also has the opportunity to focus upon ideas rather than form for there is no need to focus on spelling, grammar or syntax in notes made for personal use. De Bono's methods can thus help ESL student utilize his emergent literacy in resolving problems in his life.

Two of De Bono's methods can be particularly appropriate for the target population. **PMI** (or considering what is a **Plus**, a **Minus**, or **Interesting** about something) can be utilized not only in considering those texts which can be *read* by individuals with emergent literacy, but it can also show students how they can jot down notes to themselves when pondering alternatives before making practical decisions (De Bono 1982: 19-25). For example, job opportunities could be considered solely in terms of salary, but **PMI** helps individuals consider other factors. Work load, benefits, opportunities for training,

advancement possibilities, the need to speak English, amount of contact with native born Americans can all be considered as positive, negative, or interesting factors relevant to the decision-making process.

OVP (or a consideration of the **Other Person's Viewpoint**) could also be utilized to help students understand why individuals do things differently and this can foster cross-cultural understanding (De Bono 1982: 85-87). De Bono's methods help students move beyond simply making critical judgments to a creative consideration of why some things are done as they are and which of these could be done differently.

In conclusion, creative thinking is an important component of what has been called the literacy of thoughtfulness. Here again, the thinking may involve receptive and/or productive uses of written language, but the ESL student's higher L2 oral communicative competence can be utilized in conjunction with his emergent L2 literacy.

4.5. The ethical dimension

Increased capacities for creative and critical thinking may empower the ESL student, but increased opportunities and rights ideally bring with them an increased awareness of one's responsibilities to others within the society. This aspect of the literacy of thoughtfulness is often interrelated with critical thinking and creativity. For example, including cross-cultural understanding as an aspect of employment implies an awareness of and appreciation for another's point of view in the life of the individual, whereas a comparison of voting in nominal versus participatory democracies indicates how the ethical component could be incorporated into adult ESL literacy instruction. The unit on law and society (Chapter 7) will indicate how lessons can explore the topic of discrimination with a consideration not only of why discrimination exists, but also of what can be done to combat it.

In conclusion, critical thinking, creative thinking, and an ethical concern for others are all interrelated aspects of the literacy of thoughtfulness which, as here defined, capitalizes on the student's higher L2 oral communicative competence while also utilizing his emergent L2 literacy in developing his thinking potential.

4.6. A rationale for teaching the literacy of thoughtfulness

A rationale for teaching the literacy of thoughtfulness must be based upon an understanding and acceptance of the term as here defined, the decision that it is useful and/or needed by the target population, and the conviction that it can be taught.

The problem is perhaps best approached by means of an apocryphal conversation between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan about an arched stone bridge:

'But which is the stone that supports the bridge?' Kublai Khan asks.

'The bridge is not supported by one stone or another,' Marco answers, 'But by the line of the arch that they form.'

Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds: 'Why do you speak to me of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me.'

Polo answers: 'Without the stones there is no arch.' (Calvino 1978: 82)

By analogy, literacy could be seen as the bridge of written communications made up of stones: lexis, grammar, syntax, functional tasks, creative and critical thinking, as well as an ethical concern for others. In the best of all possible worlds, such a bridge of communication would always be available to everyone. In our imperfect world those with limited literacy could be seen as apprentice stonemasons. They could be told to keep at it, for eventually they will be able to cut stones well enough to build the bridge, which they could then use. By analogy, ESL instruction could focus on the mechanics of the language and never get to a consideration of ideas.

The ideal arched stone bridge of literacy would enable the individual to approach a receptive or productive literacy task with a critical and creative mind — or at least at a minimal level to ask (Kress 1985: 7 and Wallace as quoted by Landshear 1994: 15):

1. What is the topic?
2. Who is writing to whom?
3. Why is this topic being written about?
4. How is this topic being written about?
5. What other ways of writing about the topic are there?

In reality, the young adult ESL student often lacks the L2 literacy to write without explicit guidance (Chapter 6-7) or even to read simple teacher-generated texts independently. While he is usually bright and motivated to learn, as an immigrant he faces many problems in the new society. Outside the classroom he often lacks parents or other adults who have an understanding of the American culture with whom he can discuss these things. If literacy is a socially constructed phenomenon, then accessing the written word is dependent upon his acquisition of some knowledge of this world.

The ESL teacher has two choices — training or education? While Widdowson made this distinction with reference to teacher education, his observations also apply to the ESL classroom (1990: 62). Training can be seen as the process of preparation towards the achievement of literacy tasks, whose outcomes have been specified in advance. The goal is solutions to predictable problems — how to spell a word, how to complete a functional literacy task, and so on. On the other hand, education is not predicated on predictability or the application of ready-made solutions. Rather, problems must be viewed in light of possible solutions in the course of continuing inquiry and adaptable practice. The literacy of thoughtfulness attempts to go beyond what Bruner has called 'a language of knowledge consuming' to 'a language of culture creating' (1986: 133).

If the decision is made to educate the young Mexican adult ESL student, the implications of incorporating the literacy of thoughtfulness into ESL instruction should be considered. Just because this has not traditionally been done, it doesn't mean that it can't be done. Just because appropriate textbooks don't exist, it doesn't mean teacher-generated

texts can't be developed around topical issues. Just because these might be politically or socio-culturally *hot* issues in the community doesn't mean they shouldn't be approached in the classroom. Just because the literacy of thoughtfulness is difficult to evaluate doesn't mean it shouldn't be taught. Just because students have low literacy doesn't mean they don't want to be challenged to think.

This discussion of the literacy of thoughtfulness had indicated how this aspect of literacy could be incorporated into the instruction of adult ESL students, although it has not always (or even often) been part of the ESL curriculum. A study of why the literacy of thoughtfulness does not play a more prominent part in American education indicates that American educators have often not clearly articulated goals and objectives such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and so on in their general education policy (Brown 1991: 217-227). But Brown contends that just because something has not been done, does not mean it cannot be done. The purpose of this explicit discussion of the literacy of thoughtfulness has been to indicate how this aspect of literacy might be incorporated into the instruction of limited literacy adult ESL students.

Assessment of attempts at teaching the literacy of thoughtfulness would be much more difficult than for graphological or functional literacy. Historically researchers from different disciplines have tried to draw correlations between literacy and higher level thinking skills — anthropologists (e.g. Goody 1977, Heath 1983, Street 1984), classical scholars (e.g. Havelock 1976, Ong 1982), historians (Graff 1987ab, Lockridge 1981), psychologists (e.g. Luria 1976, Olson 1994, Vygotsky 1962), and sociologists (e.g. Gee 1988, Levine 1986). While it is beyond the scope of this work to go at length into these studies, two aspects are relevant to the literacy of thoughtfulness. First of all, literacy is embedded in the cultural context of a community so that it is not literacy *per se*, but how it is utilized by individuals that influences their orientation toward literacy: 'Literacy events must . . . be interpreted in relation to the larger sociocultural patterns which they may exemplify or reflect' (Heath 1983: 74). Heath's study indicates that even if opportunities for less mechanistic uses of literacy were provided, this would not guarantee they would be understood and/or utilized.

Second, as literacy is usually learned in schools, it is difficult to disentangle the effects of literacy *per se* from purported cognitive restructuring. Scribner and Cole (1981) studied the consequences of literacy in Liberia where some individuals became literate in English in *Western model* schools, some had learned Arabic in Quranic schools, and others had learned the indigenous Vai writing system which is learned and used in the community but not taught in school settings. Scribner and Cole concluded that it was not literacy *per se*, but the ways in which literacy was learned and used which marked differences between individuals. Previous researchers who asserted that literacy transformed thinking may have been measuring not so much the effect of reading and writing, but rather the impact of the system of formal schooling through which literacy is transmitted. This suggests that just as

teaching graphological and/or functional literacy will enhance an individual's chances of acquiring those skills, teaching the literacy of thoughtfulness will facilitate its acquisition.

It is difficult to separate the effect of literacy from socio-cultural influences upon cognitive development, but illiteracy or even limited literacy leads to certain kinds of disenfranchisement and alienation in a highly technological society. Graphological and functional literacy are not sufficient to bridge that gap without the literacy of thoughtfulness. Although it could be argued that *the literacy of thoughtfulness* as defined in this chapter contains more *thought* than *literacy*, this construct enables the ESL teacher to utilize the students' higher L2 oral communicative competence in conjunction with emergent L2 literacy skills to think. It should also be remembered that the adult ESL class may be the only educational encounter many such immigrants have, so that if thinking about important issues is to be taught it must be incorporated into the content-based curriculum.

4.7. Conclusion

The literacy of thoughtfulness has been discussed in terms of the major components of critical thinking and creative thinking. Traditionally critical literacy, critical language awareness, and *explication de texte* have been posited upon quite high levels of literacy and have become an accepted component of higher education. In contrast, the focus of adult ESL literacy education has often been restricted to graphological and functional literacy. Using Freire's concept of *conscientização* as a point of departure, the literacy of thoughtfulness has been formulated in such a way so as to indicate that high literacy need not necessarily be a prerequisite for a thoughtful consideration of ideas. ESL instruction can incorporate a student's stronger L2 oral communicative competence with his emergent L2 literacy to promote self-awareness and self-respect as well as a deeper understanding of the sociocultural practices of the new society in which the immigrant finds himself.

This chapter concludes the theoretical consideration of literacy from the vantage of the language educator. As literacy has been considered to be of socio-political importance throughout the history of the United States, the development of federal, state, and local adult ESL literacy educational mandates and their impact upon instruction will be considered next.

Chapter 5: Context of the Research Project:

Opportunities and Constraints

5.1. Introduction

In some educational settings it might be possible now simply to seek a way to implement the theoretical description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) in practice, for syllabus is a formulation of pedagogic goals. However, a syllabus is also an instrument of educational policy, so objectives must be formulated not only with reference to pedagogic effectiveness, but also in accordance with ideological positions or 'educational value systems' (Clark 1987). Policies are based upon claims as to how the world should or might be, and become operational statements of values or statements of 'prescriptive intent' (Kogan 1975: 55). Syllabus design is thus contingent upon understanding what the American mandates for adult education ESL are and why they exist.

Since colonial times educational policy has centered on two central themes: Americanization and/or empowerment. While interpretations of the two concepts has evolved over time, a belief in the importance of adult ESL literacy has led to the establishment of extensive adult ESL education programs throughout the United States. Recently a new dichotomy between adult ESL education instruction with its emphasis upon life skills versus a more academic pre-university ESL literacy instruction at the community [tertiary] college has emerged in Santa Barbara. It will be argued that the adult education ESL program more closely follows the historical mandate of aiding the immigrant to become a member of American society by fostering the development of ESL oral communicative competence and literacy while also empowering the student through an understanding of American history, civics, and cross-cultural understanding. The absence of academic tracking in adult education may realistically reflect the magnitude of the remedial education needs of the class participants, but it also results in the adult education ESL program having less prestige and receiving less funding than the parallel more academic ESL program in the community college.

A significant aspect of the Santa Barbara adult education ESL is its open-entry, open-exit policy, which means that students can begin instruction at any time during the year, daily attendance is not required, and no tests or grades are given. This policy and its pedagogical implications will be discussed in some detail, indicating opportunities for and constraints upon innovation.

5.2. Federal mandates: Americanization and/or empowerment

The United States, in contrast to Britain, is essentially a land of immigrants whose perspectives have influenced the nation's views of adult education and language policy. America developed an educational infrastructure for adult ESL instruction based upon mixed motives. While implicit and explicit historical objectives are open to interpretation (e.g. Graff 1987ab), American adult education ESL policy and immigration policy are both influenced by the real and/or perceived benefits of educating immigrants and teaching them ESL literacy.

Educational policy is normally articulated in the language of the general public good although policy may actually be the outcome of rather narrow interests or dogmatic ideologies. Since the founding of the United States, literacy has been inextricably and inseparably linked with post-Enlightenment liberal social theories and expectations regarding social and economic development, social order, and individual progress. However, the place of literacy in a society, polity, culture, or economy is much more complex, suggesting the insufficiency of a simplistic, linear model of literacy as a prerequisite for full development of the individual or society. 'The pervasive and often unproven progressive and optimistic assumptions which have guided and continue to condition our thinking and social theories about literacy and its relation to development and individual advancement' constitute what Graff has called *the literacy myth* (1987a: 53). He posits that from a historical perspective this ideology was sponsored and promoted for purposes of cultural hegemony (1987a: 83).

However, literacy skills have generally not been sought unless they are considered desirable within a culture, unless 'literacy consciousness' is the norm (Hunter and Harman 1979: 15). Public support for state funded education at all levels is at least in some measure dependent upon acceptance of its traditional utopian mission:

. . . to nurture a critical and committed citizenry that would stimulate the processes of political and culture transformation and refine and extend the workings of political democracy. (Finkelstein, as quoted by Giroux and McLaren 1986: 217)

This formulation may have been influenced by the Revolutionary Period's stress upon reason and the critical appraisal of ideas and social institutions for the sake of individual empowerment within a participatory democracy. However, belief in this new American way of life coupled with a desire to maintain cultural hegemony led to efforts to assimilate and *Americanize* more recent and often non-Protestant, non-English speaking immigrants. Americanization and empowerment might at first appear to be mutually exclusive terms, but they both have long histories in adult ESL education still manifest today in the federal mandates to teach literacy, as well as American history and government. Understanding the underlying and often unarticulated goals of Americanization and empowerment is dependent upon perceiving the historical relationships between adult ESL education and its major traditional domains of use — in religion, politics, and employment.

Acculturation through ESL literacy has been promoted because of overt convictions as well as hidden agendas. It will be posited that although ESL literacy has not been the panacea for all the immigrants' problems as *the literacy myth* might lead one to believe, a belief in the value of literacy and its Americanizing influence has ensured continual funding for adult education programs which have enabled immigrants to become literate in English and to gain some socio-historical understanding of the American society.

The early New England Puritans' belief in the functionality of literacy stemmed from the Protestant Reformation. The early settlers were a self-selected group of individuals, who stressed literacy as a means of reading and understanding the word of God (Gratten 1955: 139). Literacy was a tool to enable people to read the Bible, which revealed God's truth and precepts for moral life. This early mass literacy effort of Protestant religious instruction within the school system was intended to develop not a generalized capacity to read, but the mastery of a very limited set of prescribed texts (Resnick and Resnick 1977). Education promoted receptive uses of literacy, for literacy was conceived as a mode of transmitting an approved body of knowledge and doctrine to students rather than an attempt to stimulate critical understanding.

The strongest motivation for free public schooling may well have been 'the common Protestant impulse to bring all men the Word of God' (Lockridge 1981: 100). A concomitant benefit was acquisition of the Protestant ethic. Although the concept of free education has long been seen as the lasting contribution of early New England to the United States, it has more recently been suggested that such presumed impacts and consequences of literacy include 'normative assumptions and expectations of vague but powerful concomitants and effects presumed to accompany changes in the diffusion of literacy' (Graff 1987a: 16). Advocacy of literacy may have been more closely tied with a mandate for assimilation into the Protestant God-fearing way of life than with empowerment. A curriculum based upon this conception of literacy focused upon developing the capacity to read a limited number of texts aloud. This stress upon receptive functionality utilized texts such as the New England Primer, which were filled with religious material and focused upon the inculcation of moral principles to be used in daily life. Literacy was seen primarily as a vehicle for assisting individuals not in thinking for themselves, but in thinking correctly in what was essentially an agrarian society with limited literacy needs and uses.

Greater population density, town size, and increasing commercialization of the colonies became factors in the gradually expanding societal literacy needs and uses. Graff (1979, 1987b), who in his historical research has equated literacy with the very limited skills needed to sign one's name on public documents such as wills, argues that literacy did not lead to improved economic or social prospects. However, it is difficult if not impossible to ascertain whether a lack of even limited literacy may with time have constricted an individual's opportunities, limited his involvement in societal activities involving literacy, and denied him economic opportunities.

Literacy needs and uses increased over time, but by the late eighteenth century the country remained primarily an oral culture. Personal oral discourse and communication played a crucial role in the discussion of political events and controversies as independence was being contemplated. However, the political process at the time of the American Revolution became an important element in the education and literacy development of the people (Beard 1944: 79). Influential political tracts such as Paine's Common Sense were made more accessible to the skills of the reader with limited education by drawing upon known schemata — Biblical references and imagery. The advent of an indigenous printing industry made inexpensive almanacs and newspapers more readily available.

An ideological shift also occurred as literacy's role as a vehicle for religious polemic became recast in the newly emerging independent society. Jefferson wrote in 1787:

Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them. (as quoted by Lee 1961: 102)

Jefferson articulates the Enlightenment belief that a free, self-governing people must be able to read and write critically in order to make thoughtful choices and perform the duties of responsible citizenship. This ideal required literacy instruction to move beyond its functional religiosity to incorporate the literacy of thoughtfulness.

The extent to which this transformation took place may have been limited but the change in ideological perspective was over time reflected in educational policy positing that self-government required enlightened citizens literate enough to vote. A somewhat broader goal of 'transmitting literacy with a common core of morality, patriotism, and knowledge' (Graff 1987b: 341) evolved. The Revolution had been fought for liberty, which had to be protected — yet it was also necessary to maintain order, without which all might be lost. The purpose of education was to produce virtuous, well-behaved citizens so that a balance between order and freedom might be maintained (Kaestle 1983: 5).

Dominance of the English language and the American way of life also had to be maintained for purposes of cultural hegemony. *The Manifest Destiny*¹ led to territorial expansion through purchase and annexation of the continental United States to its present boundaries by 1867, thus effectively forcing out the Spanish, French, and Russian diplomatic influence, as well as diminishing the influence and value of such *foreign* languages and cultures in the recently added portions of country.

However, in parts of America with large concentrations of non-English speaking settlers, English was not always the medium of instruction in the public schools nor the language of local commerce. Toleration of linguistic deviance in the mainstream waned in the mid-nineteenth century with the growing influx of non-English speaking, non-Protestant immigrants. Most immigrants, then as now, were young adults. In the second half of the nineteenth century often 60% to 75% of the adult population in major cities were

foreign born. The sheer numbers of immigrants led Americans to discuss both publicly and privately how these adult newcomers might best be assimilated.

English was seen as a cohesive element and significant factor in *the melting pot*,² while formal ESL instruction was seen as a means of Americanization. In the eighteenth century literacy had been associated primarily with the spiritual well-being of the individual and the community. While religious motivations became less dominant in the nineteenth century, the Puritan ethic remained the basis for economic self-improvement.³ The informed citizen was valued less as a free thinker and more as someone who would understand and uphold the principles of the federal government:

Collectively, literacy clearly was considered part of the social cement which helped to guarantee social stability and adherence to cherished social and political norms. The function of literacy was seen as integrative; its value was to be assessed in terms of social cohesion. (Soltow and Stevens 1981: 85)

The obvious place to teach adult literacy and the concomitant Americanization was in the schools, which stood empty at night and could be utilized to teach adults after they had finished their work day.

Many local school authorities made policy decisions to fund evening schools in adult basic education (which consisted primarily of ESL instruction), even if school districts had not been specifically authorized to do so by their state legislatures (Knowles 1962: 57). Adult education became an extension of the K-12 public [kindergarten through high school state-supported] school system, rather than part of institutions of higher learning. Adult education was sometimes considered to be remedial education. Teachers often employed the same methods and materials that they used with children with a stress on the receptive skills of oral reading, which may well have assisted in the development of American pronunciation and intonation. However, these texts obviously did not address topics in which functional literacy might have been needed and there was little if any emphasis upon critical or creative thinking, which was only stressed in the colleges and universities attended by high literacy adults (Resnick 1987: 4-5).

Most educators felt that a command of spoken English would facilitate integration in the fabric of the dominant culture. English literacy would reinforce the acquisition of spoken English thus assisting in assimilation and socialization. Formal education was also seen as a means of training and socializing immigrants to be more able members of the workforce by inculcating the Puritan work ethic. It was thought that if someone submitted to the process of disciplined and conscious learning, he was also more likely to respond to further training in the work place (Graff 1987a: 67).

The desired outcome was loyal, punctual, non-disruptive workers whose socialization through schooling would support the status quo. These non-cognitive functions of schooling were related to the creation of a workforce acceptable to modern industrial capitalism:

Promoting discipline, moral values, and the 'training in being trained' . . . mattered most in the preparation of a modern industrial workforce. These were the purposes of the school. (Graff 1987a: 183).

Correct and proper moral schooling in this sense could be used to support the cultural hegemony of the dominant English-speaking Protestant segments of society. Americanization was the goal, and education in one form or another was the most common and valued approach. Thus training in literacy and its social, cultural and economic concomitants was assumed to be the most effective way to Americanize immigrants. While reformers differed in their assessments as to the nature of assimilation and the degree to which multiculturalism was possible or desirable, all basically agreed on the importance of literacy and familiarity with the moral bases of American society (Graff 1987b: 371). Even the social reformer, Jane Addams, observed that 'the public schools in the immigrant colonies deserve all the praise as Americanizing agencies which can be bestowed upon them' (1910: 254).

Settlement houses in urban immigrant neighborhoods also provided educational opportunities for adults. Cultural activities were used to promote an appreciation of the immigrant's own background while also developing an understanding of the American way of life. Here English instruction was sometimes less by rote and attempts were made to promote cross-cultural appreciation and understanding, rather than simply Americanization.

The spread of adult education through the public schools and settlement houses was not due solely to feelings of benevolence by the dominant culture. Many citizens feared that alien individuals with their foreign cultures and tongues could disrupt American society:

Training in [ESL] literacy and its social, cultural, and economic concomitants was assumed to be the most effective path to the reformation of immigrants and their children. Assimilation was the goal, and education, in one form or another, was the most common and valued approach. (Graff 1987b: 371)

Educators and lawmakers varied in their conceptions of assimilation, the extent to which pluralism would be acceptable and/or possible, and the degree to which immigrants could or should hold to their traditional cultural values.

Some Americans held less optimistic views of the assimilative properties of education and immigrants' possible contributions to the society. Hostility to immigrants led to the beginnings of nativism, a term coined in the nineteenth century to assert the primacy of the interests of native inhabitants over those of immigrants:

Nativism . . . should be defined as intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e., 'un-American') connections. Specific nativistic antagonisms may, and do, vary widely in response to the changing character of minority irritants and the shifting conditions of the day; but through each separate hostility runs the connecting, energizing force of modern nationalism. While drawing on much broader cultural antipathies and ethnocentric judgments, nativism translates them into a zeal to destroy the enemies of a distinctly American way of life. (Higham 1969:4).

Objections to uncontrolled immigration were rooted in ethnic, linguistic, and religious prejudice, as well as the fear that immigrants might take jobs away from Americans.

However, immigration continued unabated as there was no Constitutional clarity as to whether the states or the federal government had jurisdiction over immigration and naturalization.⁴ When the federal government was given this responsibility in 1906, legislation was immediately introduced which used literacy as a prerequisite for immigration, thus favoring the more educated from the more industrialized European countries. Literacy was seen as being what in today's parlance might be called a *politically correct* motive, in that literacy could be considered a skill attainable by anyone and leading to enfranchisement, rather than being an exclusionary factor. Nativists proposing legislation favoring white Anglo-Saxon Protestants did not have to make explicit their prejudices against Catholics and Jews, particularly those from southern and eastern Europe — *the literacy myth* made literacy a justifiable criterion.

The 1917 Immigration Act requiring a literacy test of all immigrants over the age of sixteen could be seen as supportive of education, but again the literacy requirement was an acceptable way to disguise exclusionary practices aimed at less literate peasants from Southern Europe, who were considered less culturally desirable, and peasants from Eastern Europe, who were not only culturally but also possibly politically undesirable, as they might be influenced by Bolshevism, which 'would infect America with alien ideology' (Eslon 1993: 78) While literacy was held up as the desired good, it was again utilized for gatekeeper functions.

The provision of ESL literacy education for landed adult immigrants in the early twentieth century was rarely one of unmitigated beneficence. Concurrent was usually an equally strong (if not stronger) belief in the power of ESL literacy to Americanize immigrants and assist them in their understanding of their responsibilities in the existent society. Nativism aside, literacy was held to be the first requisite of a democratic state in which involvement in politics was viewed not only as a right, but as a responsibility and a duty. Every citizen was expected to play an active role, become involved, and vote. This civic perspective had to be learned by immigrants with little or no previous experience in participatory democracy.

Both nativists and progressive educators openly espoused such a policy, but with different underlying objectives. The well-known American educator, John Dewey, proposed that 'education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform' (as cited by Cremin 1988:1). Dewey believed that

... through education a society can formulate its own purposes, organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move (as cited by Cremin 1988:151).

Dewey emphasized social development in the broadest sense. A society had three alternatives. It could drift and thus perpetuate the present confusion and possibly increase it. A society could be intelligently conservative and continue on a given path. Or it could

provide conditions for ever enlarging the people's experiences, which would lead to changes in the old social order. This last position stressed the importance of education and literacy. Dewey believed that democracy and liberalism were dependent upon an educated people, who needed to be literate in order to read critically and to become a positive force in the society (Faust 1968: 347). Liberal educators supported this expansive view of adult education, but nativists continued to support adult education primarily because literacy education would teach immigrants English and mold them into a preconceived notion of what it meant to be an American.

Literacy was also advocated for socio-economic reasons. A 1918 US Bureau of Education publication, Adult Illiteracy, stated that literacy was not only an important factor in becoming an informed and involved citizen, but also that illiteracy led to wasted economic and human potential, a reminder of the Puritan work ethic:

Unless means are provided for reaching the illiterate and near illiterate, every social problem must remain needlessly complex and slow in solution, because social and representative government rests upon an implied basis of universal ability to read and write. (Talbot as cited by Cook 1977:3).

The publication urged industry to give workers release time for literacy education, for it was felt that businesses would thus overcome industrial inefficiency and social waste — a rationale still underlying the American stress on functional literacy today.

World War I reemphasized in the minds of many the need for the rapid Americanization of immigrants. Soon adult education ESL classes became the dominant activity of the public evening schools:

Americanization programs became so large that they often overshadowed other adult-education activities. In the minds of many adult education became synonymous with Americanization, and even today some people think of adult education primarily as the education of immigrants. (Kempfer 1955:155)

Programs for immigrants were so extensive that some states had divisions of adult education within state departments of education, whereas others, such as Connecticut, had separate Departments of Education and Americanization. This terminology indicates that assimilation was an accepted and openly articulated policy. Many states mandated local school districts to offer adult ESL classes and the provision for adult ESL education in some states, such as California, still stems from that period. In 1918 Congress went so far as to authorize the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service to provide civics materials and information about naturalization to schools at no cost. Regardless of the auspices, citizenship classes played an important role in helping the public accept and endorse the concept of evening schools for adults.

The immigration quota system favoring literate Protestant Northern Europeans ⁵ with time became seen as ethnically discriminatory. However, the present preference system still favors highly educated immigrants with definite vocational skills, so literacy remains a gatekeeper.⁶

The last major piece of US immigration legislation provided amnesty for all long-term illegal residents, so neither ethnicity nor literacy could be used as exclusionary factors. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 [IRCA] permitted more than 3 million undocumented aliens to apply for an amnesty program. Approximately 1.6 million (55%) of the applicants had been residing illegally in California and more than 85% of these were Mexicans, who had limited literacy in both Spanish and English. This was the first time since 1965 that large numbers of limited literacy individuals (who were not political refugees) were given the opportunity to become citizens, but the regulations of this act reaffirmed the country's belief in the need for literacy in English and Americanization. IRCA required applicants either to be literate in English or to show that they were working toward literacy and an understanding of American history and civics by completing at least 40 hours of instruction within 18 months of application. Individuals qualifying for IRCA could after five years apply for citizenship, a prerequisite for which was a written command of English and successful completion of a written examination on American history and government. While some American citizens and even ESL educators were surprised by these IRCA provisions, this historical overview indicates that Americanization and empowerment have been underlying mandates in the development of the extensive system of free adult ESL education in the United States.

Historically it is difficult to ascertain exactly how ESL literacy has been taught since it emerged as the main motivating force for adult education in the late nineteenth century. As it is no longer acceptable to talk about Americanization or assimilation of immigrants or attempt to evaluate the extent to which their assimilation enables them to complete functional literacy tasks in daily life, citizenship tests focus on US history and civics. Even here there is a mismatch between the ideal of a literate and thoughtful new citizen of a participatory democracy and what citizenship tests actually require and measure.

Presently, the citizenship examination has two portions: multiple choice questions and the dictation of two sentences. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System [CASAS], the testing agency used in California, makes available a list of 86 questions that might be used in the multiple choice section and a sample of 25 possible dictation questions. The multiple choice section requires receptive reading skills and the functional literacy skills of document processing to understand the layout and to comprehend how to mark answers on a computerized scantron form. The dictation section requires productive uses of literacy including the graphological skills of penmanship and spelling.

In a sense *the literacy myth* persists for although literacy is intended to facilitate the development of an informed, thoughtful, and articulate populace, the citizenship test makes no effort to demand or even to test US history and civics at this level. Therefore, while the policy maker articulates the needs and uses of literacy in idealistic terms, there is no real expectation that these will be met by the individual or even necessarily emphasized in the curriculum.

Nevertheless, the value of policy is that it articulates possible goals. The extent to which these are accepted by a society is the basis for continued funding of adult education. The extent to which these goals meet the needs of the students becomes the basis for attendance in the program. From a federal perspective, the purported purpose of adult education is to help an individual develop some command of literacy, US history and civics. Acquisition of this knowledge is ostensibly for the sake of empowering the immigrant to become a useful and productive member of a multicultural society. The formerly open objective of Americanization has now become a more hidden agenda as it is no longer politically correct to speak of assimilation.

Americanization and empowerment may at first seem to be mutually exclusive but this is not necessarily the case. While the thrust of providing ESL instruction may have been more upon Americanization than empowerment, the non-English speaking illiterate immigrant was and remains inevitably disenfranchised from access and advancement in a predominantly English-speaking society. Multiculturalism can be of value to a society, but in reality a command of both spoken and written English has become a prerequisite for integration into and advancement in the highly technological American society of today. Even if adult ESL programs have been established and maintained for mixed motives with greater or lesser emphasis on assimilation and/or empowerment, immigration policy and federal regulations have played a role in the development of and commitment to free adult ESL instruction in the United States. Ironically federal government mandates have assisted the states in the development of a nation-wide adult education intended to educate all immigrants although another branch of the government is involved in trying to deport that portion of these people who are here illegally.

As education is locally funded and administered in the United States, state adult education ESL policy, which is articulated more in terms of functional literacy skills needed in the daily round, must be considered next. The adult education program must also be distinguished from the more academic community college program. In accordance with *the literacy myth*, the community college program is more prestigious because it emphasizes more academic training, but this will be shown to be less suitable for the target population for whom a more content-based curriculum with an open-entry open-exit policy has evolved.

5.3 Local mandates: Academic literacy or life skills

Instruction in adult ESL has been provided in Santa Barbara, California since 1918. This section will provide an overview of the implementation of federal statutes locally and the influence of conceptions of the nature and value of literacy upon how ESL is taught and by whom. It will be argued that the original aim of adult ESL instruction was to enable individuals to function effectively as citizens in the American society and this was also seen as the local mandate in Santa Barbara. A shift in emphasis occurred when the

administration of adult ESL instruction was moved from the high school district to the community college district in 1959. A more academic and structured ESL program has been developed on the main campus while the adult education ESL program, taught at sites throughout the community, has remained more in accord with the earlier adult education ESL mandates for Americanization and/or empowerment of individuals. A comparison of these two programs will suggest that although the more academic ESL program is more prestigious, better funded, and more academically demanding, its low retention rate indicates that it may not be meeting the student's perceived or real needs for long term education and that the adult education program may be more appropriate for many members of the immigrant community.⁷

To put this discussion in historical context, classes in literacy and English for foreign-born adults were established by the Santa Barbara Board of Education in 1918 as a result of the 1917 Immigration Act, which required literacy of any immigrant wishing to become a naturalized citizen. The first class consisted of about 2/3 Europeans and 1/3 Mexicans (Wake 1994). While such classes were originally offered by federal mandate, the 1921 California Education Code, Article 4, Section 52552, required high school districts to offer ESL instruction upon the request of 25 or more citizens. This act was modified in 1923 by Education Code, Article 3, Section 52540, which has not been superseded to this day and still provides the state mandate for adult ESL instruction. As immigration and naturalization are not constitutionally within the purview of each state, citizenship instruction is not mentioned here:

Upon application of 20 or more persons above the age of 18 years residing in a high school district who cannot speak, read, or write the English language to a degree of proficiency equal to that required for the completion of the eighth grade of the elementary schools, the governing board of the high school district shall establish classes in English. (Dawson and Best 1991: 29)

For the last 75 years Santa Barbara has offered adult ESL classes. For the first 29 years adult education was offered through an extension of the K-12 school district after which it became an adjunct to the community college district. Adult education goals have been articulated differently over time and now are no longer expressed in terms of Americanization or assimilation. Yet the underlying premise of teaching immigrants how to function in American society remains. An understanding of the American socio-cultural context has been taught through a content-based curriculum using the medium of English. Twentieth century increases in literacy needs and uses within the highly technological American society have led to increasing emphasis upon functional literacy skills needed in the workplace, the household, and in interaction with the bureaucratic infrastructure.

The adult education program has a highly client-centered approach. In any one term over 50 classes are held at 16 easily accessible sites throughout the community such as schools and community centers. As the majority of the students work full time during the day, most classes are held for two hours in the evening from 7-9 PM four nights a week. A

limited number of 2.5 hour morning and afternoon classes are also offered. Each term about 1700 students enroll. They are predominantly Mexican, although some come from Central and South America, Europe, and Asia.

American adult basic education has traditionally been free in the United States in accord with societal support of public [state-supported] education for almost 300 years. Although primary and secondary schools have compulsory attendance policies, every effort has been made to make adult basic education available to individuals who usually work 40-60 hours a week, often work on changing shifts, and who may also have family responsibilities. Therefore, classes are not only free, but are based on an open-entry open-exit format, which means that students can enter or leave the course at any time (Chapter 5.4.). Regular attendance is not required which is to the advantage of students who may not be able to attend class regularly. The educational policy is to encourage attendance even if it is irregular, because if students do not come at all, they may never become literate.

As many adult education students only have time to study only in class, the emphasis is upon class work. Traditionally no homework is required. Irregular attendance makes it difficult to give examinations or grades, but students are encouraged to develop an understanding of what they have learned, as well as an appreciation of their individual strengths and weaknesses. While grades can indicate how a student performed either in regard to a pre-established norm or in comparison with other students in the class, grades often fail to show how much progress an individual student has actually made.

ESL students with limited previous schooling and literacy are often hesitant about coming to class at all and may exhibit a much slower learning curve than more educated classmates. Slow students can feel frustration, if not failure, when standards other than the individual's personal growth are used. A student's personal motivation is what brought him to class in the first place. Grades, rather than providing external motivation, might well send a student with limited educational background the message that his learning curve is inadequate although in reality a student might be making real, although slow, progress. Students can move to more difficult or easier classes at any time during a term. There is also no stigma attached to repeating a class and a student may do so a number of times until he feels confident enough to move up. The whole class is encouraged to understand and respect the fact that students learn at different rates of speed. The most orally fluent students often have the lowest literacy (the reason they are still in the class), but are valued class members because of their oral contributions.

The curriculum will be discussed later in greater detail (Chapter 5.4, Chapter 6), but suffice it to say that the emphasis is upon developing those oral and literate ESL proficiencies needed by the immigrant in his new society. While goals are explicitly expressed in terms of empowerment, Americanization is an implicit objective to the extent that an individual should understand the society and be able to function in the United States. Therefore the Santa Barbara adult education ESL program can be seen as a continuation of educational policies for immigrants that have evolved particularly in the last

150 years, although the increasing needs and uses of literacy for everyone within the society has led to a greater stress upon productive and well as receptive uses of written English in the daily round.

A second ESL program, developed at the main community college site, should be considered for comparison even though ^{the} adult education ESL program may from this analysis appear to be ^{more} appropriate for the immigrant population. American community colleges were originally formed to provide vocational training and adult basic education, including ESL instruction. However, in the mid-twentieth century community colleges changed their focus. They now also provide introductory college classes which are transferable for credit to colleges and universities granting Bachelor of Arts and/or Bachelor of Science degrees. Consequently, most community colleges now regard their transfer function to be of equal, if not greater, worth and prestige than vocational training and adult basic education. Funding for site development and well paid full-time faculty with higher academic qualifications (but not necessarily greater teaching competency) indicate that the more academic program is held in higher regard than what is considered to be a more marginal, but actually larger, adult education program.

All this is in accord with *the literacy myth* (Graff 1987ab, see also Chapter 5.2). Community college ESL instruction reflects the general conviction of the community college faculty at large that high literacy is the prerequisite for success in higher education. Therefore community college ESL courses follow the traditional American academic pattern of required attendance, homework, tests, and examinations — all of which enable a student to make substantial progress in gaining language skills in each course if he has the necessary educational background (including transferable skills from L1), the money to pay for fees and books, and the time to devote to regular attendance and homework. The community college ESL program, like many ESOL/L2 programs in institutions of higher learning, focuses on developing L2 skills for academic work. Yet follow-up studies indicate that only about 6% of the students entering beginning ESL actually complete the ESL program and then transfer into English 80 [basic pre-college English], which is the English proficiency level prerequisite for any vocational training or academic classes transferable to any of the 29 state-supported universities (Friedlander 1994).

Various reasons for the low retention rate of ESL students in the academic ESL program have been posited. ESL students may be attracted to the community college because they perceive the setting to be more prestigious than classes held in high schools and other community settings. Such a rigorous program with an emphasis upon grammar, syntax, reading comprehension and academic writing may serve the academically-minded and academically prepared student well. Yet it may not be appropriate for many young adult Mexicans from rural settings who may be handicapped by limited L1/L2 literacy, underdeveloped study skills, and major study time constraints.

While a major goal of basic skills education at the community college level is to get students up to a level where they can succeed in vocational training and academic

instruction, the Mexican ESL student may not see the immediate (or future) applicability of better reading comprehension and may question the value of better writing skills. This is not to say that there cannot be utility or personal value in gaining greater ESL literacy or progressing to courses in specific content areas, but the effort may seem incommensurate with the payoff. When Mexican community college students move to higher levels of ESL they are also together with more foreign students, particularly Asians, who come from a more literate background, have better study skills, and are more successful in the classroom.

There is a low articulation from ESL to the usually 2 year full-time vocational programs by Mexican ESL students. They often require at least twice as long to finish such a program because they have to continue working and can only attend college part time. Perhaps these students have difficulty in visualizing how part-time community college attendance will ever lead to proficiencies needed for better employment or economic advancement. These ESL students may have found through experience that employment opportunities are often most dependent upon being a quick learner on the job and having the right connections.

Finally, although the community college ESL student could ultimately transfer to a university, this requires a strong commitment in money and time, the development of a high level of ESL literacy and study skills, and a belief that the (in many respects) unknown goal is attainable. The more academic program may not meet the student's real and/or perceived needs in terms of how literacy has been defined so far (Chapters 2-4). Therefore, empowerment through academic literacy may be an illusive goal for these Mexican students who do not want, need, or feel they can achieve that level of proficiency. It could be argued that any progress in learning English leads to Americanization and assimilation, but it is outside the mission of the community college program to focus upon the history, civics, socio-cultural understanding, and the more functional literacy skills that immigrant ESL students may consider to be more relevant and applicable in daily life.

In summary, while public commitment to adult ESL literacy continues, the community has developed two differently conceptualized ESL programs to serve the needs of the immigrant community. It has been argued that the adult education ESL program addresses the immediate literacy needs of the students within a content-based curriculum involving life skills, thus incorporating the historical mandates of Americanization and empowerment. This program is of value for a number of reasons — teaching sites are located throughout the community, instruction is free, the non-grading policy provides an atmosphere in which even adults with very little previous formal education can succeed, and students are welcome even if they are unable to attend regularly and/or are unable to do homework. As the focus of adult education ESL is on meeting the needs of the students in a given class on any given day, the format favors the innovative teacher rather than one who wishes to proceed through a lock-step syllabus. A final distinguishing feature of adult

education ESL is its provision for open-entry open-exit. As this policy has a significant influence on curriculum design, it will now be discussed in greater detail.

5.4. The open-entry open-exit curriculum: Advantages and constraints

Developing a curriculum for and teaching an open-entry open-exit adult education ESL course may at first appear difficult. In reality the syllabus used is not only appropriate for the students for whom the everyday demands of full employment and family responsibilities are many, but the *recycling of concepts* also makes it possible to teach a class containing students with varying degrees of L1 and ESL literacy more effectively. Adult education ESL teachers are encouraged to modify each lesson to meet the needs of the students in attendance on any given day. Consequently, the teachers have greater latitude in syllabus design than instructors in an ESL program with sequential levels and mandated curricula. For those unfamiliar with open-entry open-exit programs, factors underlying curriculum design for such a program need to be explained more fully.

In the United States there is no federal control of education and consequently no national curriculum. While adult ESL instruction has been state funded since its inception, responsibility for curriculum development and program evaluation long remained the responsibility of each individual school district.

In 1988 the California Superintendent of Public Instruction established an adult education advisory committee. The work done by this task force led to the development of model standards for adult education ESL programs:

[These] reflect current thinking about developmental stages in second-language acquisition and the nature of communicative competence. The descriptions distinguish different levels of language proficiency based on content, language functions, and language forms as well as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. (Smith 1992: v).

This report recommended the development of quality standards and measurable goals, that were to apply to open-entry and open-exit, traditional, and nontraditional conditions and should help to 'establish guidelines for excellence and criteria for funding incentives' (1989: 75). However, there is an inherent problem in trying to apply the same standards and goals to traditionally taught classes (such as the academic community college ESL classes) and to open-entry open-exit settings because of the very different ways in which the two kinds of courses are taught.

The state mandates provided incentive for the Santa Barbara Adult Education ESL coordinator to attempt to define the program's policy in Overview of the Non-Credit ESL Program: Description of Open-Entry, Open-Exit Classes of February 1993. In this document the open-entry open-exit policy is described as follows:

The fact that Adult Education's ESL classes are 'open-entry, open-exit' accounts for the greatest single contrast between the credit and non-credit programs. Non-credit students may enter or leave at any time during our quarters; this causes attendance to fluctuate greatly; it also necessitates the

instructors to constantly 'integrate' newcomer students into their classes; thus no two consecutive classes would contain the same students; such enrollment and attendance patterns preclude a strictly academic approach (based upon the traditional, ordered continuum of language and grammar instruction). (Scott 1993: 1)

A person from a more traditional Western academic background, who is used to the sequential learning that a standard curriculum provides, may find the concept of an open-entry open-exit program unusual, but the underlying concept of open access to adult basic education has led to the administrative decision to admit students at any time during a term and irregular attendance is permitted. As a result, by the end of a ten week term more than 80 students may be enrolled in a class which has a steady core of 10 students and irregular attendance by others to produce on average 20-25 per class session. Such roster numbers may also be deceptive because, if a student decides he has been placed too high or too low and changes classes, no computerized tracking is available to indicate the switch and the student is left on the roster of each class he attends during the term.

Open-entry open-exit is sometimes mistakenly perceived as easy access for unmotivated individuals. In actuality, open-entry open-exit provides educational opportunities for individuals, who are often unable to attend class regularly. Limited L1 schooling as well as low L1 and L2 literacy also cause many students to question their ability to succeed in a classroom situation. A teacher in open-entry-open exit classes needs to convince her students of their ability to learn and encourage them to measure their own individual progress rather than to judge themselves against a pre-established norm. While this concept is not commonly used in academia, it is widely accepted in individual sports, where athletes try to improve on their own best time rather than to aim for new world records. It seems reasonable to suggest that attempting to evaluate individual progress rather than simply using pre-set norms might be useful in other educational settings besides ESL adult education.

The basic premise of open-entry open-exit is that everyone, even those with limited literacy or substantial outside responsibilities, should be encouraged to learn and improve their English. Therefore, open-entry open-exit should not be compared with a more academic program and should not be considered to be an inferior method, even if adult education ESL students do not gain English skills as rapidly as the community college ESL students in the course of a semester. Open-entry open-exit is valued by those who wish to reach people where they are, to instill confidence in their ability to learn, to encourage attendance (but not to criticize irregular attendance), and to teach English as part of a content-based curriculum which provides immigrants with knowledge they need to function in their new society. Adult education ESL students come to class only as long as the instruction is relevant, thus retention rates provide some indication of teacher effectiveness. Adult education ESL teachers are paid hourly and do not have contracts. As any class can be canceled if attendance falls below 10 on any 2 consecutive nights, continued

employment is dependent on attendance and the correlated factor of how well students feel their needs are being met.

Open-entry open-exit places definite constraints upon curriculum design:

To deal with the inherent obstacles of 'open-entry' the non-credit program's ESL lessons must be designed with great flexibility with regard to both curriculum and teaching strategies. . . . A central strategy is to 'recycle' basic grammatical structures, which will constitute practice and review to the ongoing student, while it may be an 'introduction' to the newest students. (Scott 1993: 1)

Furthermore, students differ widely in their ability to learn languages, previous exposure to the English language, academic background, motivation, and time available for study outside of class.

In an ESL program with a traditional sequential curriculum offered in successive courses, some students will always do well, some will manage, and some will fall further and further behind and may become quite discouraged. However, the recycling of concepts in an open-entry open-exit program provides the review that slower students may need without making them feel inadequate while the brightest may move up to a more advanced class at any time. Most students only take a course once, but students with very limited literacy may repeat courses until they feel ready to go on to the next level. A course does not follow an assigned text; the curriculum is based upon the assumption that core aspects of grammar, graphological skills, aspects of functional literacy, and ways of thinking can be presented again and again as part of a content-based curriculum for the benefit of students. In this kind of a teaching situation the teacher must constantly adjust to what the students want and need to learn.

The content of a course may be considered in advance, but what will be taken up in any given class meeting should be appropriate according to the needs of the students actually present on a given day:

In order to accomplish this feat of constant integration of newcomers, we have found that a Life Skills curriculum and context are practical and necessary to immigrants' lives; practical survival topics formulate the content areas within which 'grammar' is taught. The Life Skills areas are as follows:

1. Personal identification and human relations
2. Home and family
3. Consumer topics and shopping
4. Occupations and work activities
5. Practical government and American history and institutions
6. Cultural interchange. (Scott 1993: 1)

The areas mentioned in this life skills curriculum mirror functional literacy content areas (Chapter 3). The resultant content-based curriculum focuses not only upon how the American society developed in terms of history and civics, but also on how to function within that society.

The guidelines go on to discuss the literacy skills of the adult education population:

At certain sites, such as Santa Barbara High School. . . , the large majority of non-credit students comes with little or no education in their country of

origin. Therefore the proportion of the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is initially weighted more heavily toward listening and speaking; reading and writing are introduced as soon as it's appropriate (in keeping with the precepts advocated by ESL teacher trainers and current research into language acquisition). (Scott 1993: 1)

Because of the very limited L1 literacy of some beginning students, initial emphasis is upon making it possible for students to develop at least the minimal ESL oral communicative competence needed in their everyday lives. Also, for the given population L2 oral skills are usually acquired faster than L2 literacy. Reading and writing are necessary, but the appropriate time to introduce literacy is left to the discretion of the teacher. By the intermediate level, most students have developed quite adequate oral L2 communicative competence and will continue to advance in this area through contacts in the work place and throughout the community. As literacy skills require formal tuition, ESL literacy becomes the focus at the intermediate level — the site of the research project. However, it should be noted that the guidelines do not indicate on what emphasis should be placed nor what approach should be used.

Teachers are mandated to teach not only life skills and the four basic language skills but also to teach the systemic knowledge of the language system which is needed to develop a command of the language:

If the curriculum were exclusively Life Skills, there would be a danger of not teaching the level of grammar appropriate for a given class. Therefore two years ago we adopted some minimal Grammatical Guidelines to apply to each level of our classes. The guidelines were distributed to teachers with the instruction to teach the items, but materials, order and methodology were left to the discretion of the instructor. . . .

Although there is a Life Skills Curriculum . . . with the Grammar Guidelines overlay, teachers are free to adapt these two curricula to their own classes. Given the day or number of contact hours, it would be counter-productive to mandate uniformity of curriculum or formal 'departmental exams' for the purposes of uniformity or conformity only. (Scott 1993: 1-3)

This statement is a good document summary, but it becomes evident that graphological literacy (Chapter 2) and the literacy of thoughtfulness (Chapter 4) are not included as part of the articulated curriculum. Furthermore, while these guidelines provide flexibility and autonomy that can be utilized by an experienced and innovative adult education ESL instructor, the document does not provide sufficient guidance in curriculum development for the inexperienced teachers. The 1994 replacement of a full-time supervisor with an hourly coordinator has made it even more difficult to provide guidance where needed. Cognizant of this difficulty the coordinator makes every effort to hire experienced teachers who can function autonomously.

Teachers are encouraged to utilize community resources. They can invite outside speakers, such as policemen and AIDS educators. Permission for field trips for library tours, mock trials, and cultural events is readily obtained. The largest constraints are

unwritten, namely that highly controversial topics (such as contraception and illegal immigration) must be treated with discretion.

Course evaluation has only recently been required by state mandate but no specific state guidelines have been provided. How to secure evaluations in an open-entry open-exit course has to date been left by the local supervisor to the discretion of the instructor, but how this should be done is open to debate. Clearly few students have been present for the whole term, so that traditional examinations which cover all the material in the curriculum are not meaningful indicators of the progress of students, particularly if the emphasis has been upon the progress of each individual student rather than achievement of a set norm. Furthermore, an exit questionnaire cannot be used because the instructor never knows when a student will be there for the last time unless the student volunteers that information to her. However, possible methods include ongoing quantitative and qualitative classroom evaluation of students' oral and written performance, as well as student evaluations of their learning styles, the efficacy of the teaching methods, and the relevance of course content (Chapter 6-7).

In summary, perhaps the most striking features of an open-entry open-exit program are the lack of appropriateness of a more traditional, sequentially-ordered curriculum and the necessity to develop a content-based curriculum in which main points are recycled as needed through techniques appropriate to an ever-changing class population. A process syllabus (Breen 1987, White 1988) is in many ways similar to what is required in this setting because ongoing evaluation by both the teacher and students influence the direction of the course. While the input of students is important, they are sometimes confronted by what Plato would call 'double ignorance' — they don't know what they don't know. The teacher must take the initiative to decide what might be included in the content-based curriculum. What is taught is influenced by who is present on any given day and the nature of their needs as perceived by the teacher and/or articulated by the students themselves.

5.5. Conclusion

In order to understand the context of the research project, an historical overview of the development of provisions for development of the extensive American adult education ESL has been given. While the purported benefits of literacy constitute what has come to be called *the literacy myth* (Graff 1987ab), ideals as well as normative assumptions and expectations have been responsible for the development of educational policies supporting the adult education ESL system. As literacy is a socially constructed phenomenon, how it has been taught has been related to its perceived usefulness by different segments of the society over time. In the last three hundred years there have been three dominant ideological motivations for the acquisition of literacy: to read the Word of God and live by the Puritan ethic, to become an informed and active member of a participatory democracy, and to

Americanize into the existent society and the workforce. These policy objectives can also be viewed in terms of assimilation and/or empowerment.

It is difficult to ascertain historical literacy needs and uses, but these have gradually increased over time. In a highly technological and literate community such as Santa Barbara the focus of the adult education program is now upon the ESL student's possible literacy needs and uses within the society. The open-entry open-exit non-graded policy is appropriate for limited literacy students with little formal education, and who for a variety of reasons have difficulty in attending class regularly.

The federal mandates of teaching English, US history and civics, as well as the state mandates to teach a life skills curriculum within an open-entry open-exit adult education ESL program have now been examined. If theory is to be related to practice, next a research paradigm must be developed, which will then enable the teacher/researcher to design a pilot intermediate adult education ESL literacy course, which takes into account the three aspects of literacy (Chapters 2-4) within the parameters provided by the federal, state, and local ESL instructional mandates.

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- 1 *The Manifest Destiny* was a belief that the United States was a chosen land and it had been allocated the entire North American continent by God. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the Spanish cession of Florida in 1819, the annexation of Texas in 1845, the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, and the purchase of Alaska in 1867 completed the continental United States.
 - 2 The *melting pot*, an expression still often used in the United States today, is based upon the title of Israel Zangwill's play, The Melting Pot, which dealt with the question of Americanization. The protagonist, Don Quixano claims that America is 'God's Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming' (1909: 33).
 - 3 The popular boys' stories by Horatio Alger (1832-1899) implied that through pluck and hard work anyone could be successful in America.
 - 4 The US Constitution states that powers not explicitly given to the federal [national] government remain in the hands of the individual states. However in 1892 the Supreme Court ruled that responsibilities for immigration belonged exclusively to the federal government and in 1906 responsibility for naturalization was also shifted to the federal government.
 - 5 The 1917 Immigration Act limited immigration on the basis of literacy, but later acts established immigration quotas based upon the foreign-born population of each

nationality already residing in the US in the late nineteenth century. This legislation reinforced the immigration bias in favor Protestant northern Europeans. By 1927 Western Europe received 82% of the world immigration quota, Eastern Europe 14%, the rest of the world 4% with the total exclusion of many Asian ethnic groups. Automatic citizenship for any applicant from the Western Hemisphere was provided. Immigration slowed during the Depression, when quotas were intentionally not filled. Those gaining admission were mainly highly educated individuals — both Jews and political activists — who realized the potential problems raised by European fascist regimes early enough to secure immigration visas to a country otherwise unwilling to give access to anyone who would swell the ranks of the unemployed.

- 6 While immigration policy with its quotas continued to favor the more literate northern Europeans, sentiment rose against this type of veiled discrimination. National quotas were finally abolished in 1965. However, the new Hart-Celler Immigration Act introduced a preference system favoring educated immigrants with definite vocational skills, so again literacy and particularly ESL literacy became a major issue. Visas were only given to potential immigrants who could prove they had skills which America needed, and preference was given to those with a good command of written and spoken English. Thus literacy again became the basis for the new exclusionary policy, which favored the more educated (and often more Westernized) immigrants.
- 7 For a detailed comparison of the two programs see Appendix 5.1.

Chapter 6: Research Paradigm and the Design of an Experimental Adult ESL Literacy Course

6.1. Introduction

The linguistic description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) only gains pedagogical validity if it can be realized in practice. Therefore a model of research must be sought which can be used by the teacher/researcher to develop, instruct, and evaluate a pilot adult education intermediate ESL course.

The research paradigm must be found which can be used within the constraints of the open-entry open-exit policy of the Santa Barbara Adult Education ESL program. The fluctuating attendance precludes the development of a traditional course syllabus, so a way must be found to develop a less rigid structure which provides a framework of concepts to be recycled throughout the course. The adult education program focuses upon class work and discourages homework, tests, and examinations. Consequently a qualitative means of formative and summative assessment must be found.

The usefulness of a qualitative research paradigm based upon individual student portfolios will be analyzed. It must be established whether portfolios can be used to develop personal literacy profiles, to determine which L1/L2 literacy skills can be utilized to further the development of L2 literacy, and to assess the students' emergent literacy by means of formative and summative assessment of students' acquisition of literacy. It will also be necessary to consider whether portfolios can be used for continual evaluation and modification of teaching methods and materials, as well as for final summative assessment of the teacher/research project.

6.2: The teacher as researcher

The description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) can be viewed as a theoretical construct, but it only gains pedagogical validity if it can be realized in practice. Consequently what is needed is a paradigm of educational research which is based upon the dialectic between theory and practice and accounts for how change is realized through a dynamic interrelationship. This takes into account the 'reflexive, interdependent relationship between theory and practice, between abstract ideas deriving from various areas of enquiry and their actualization in the achievement of practical outcomes' (Widdowson 1990: 30). An attempt to realize theory in practice, or, conversely, to understand how practice is informed by theory, promotes more effective learning and the professional development of the teacher:

It provides for the possibility of improved techniques for bringing about learning . . . [and] it provides a rationale whereby such techniques can be explicitly identified as exemplars of more general principles of teaching. (Widdowson 1990: 30)

Just as theory may remain an abstract concept without practical pedagogical validity, in like manner methods of teaching only gain validity if they are based on an underlying theoretical rationale. Flashy methods which appeal to students can get any teacher through a class period, but it is insufficient to say 'We teach this way because this is how people learn', for such a statement is based upon 'an unexamined and insidious system of circular logic entrenched in a tradition of methods' (Courts 1991: xxv). Rather theory must not only become the basis for practice, but the two must be interrelated:

. . . approaches to effective teaching — the ability to create sequences of methods over a period of time that genuinely contribute to the students' learning — are generated by theoretical structures. And the creation of approaches based on generative theoretical structures, the implementation of methods, should produce a dynamic interrelationship with the theoretical structures that causes both to change and grow through experience and reflection. (Courts 1991: vi)

This interrelationship between theory and practice is the basis for thoughtful teaching.

Action research is the term that has come to be associated with research done by teachers:

The 'objects' of action research — the things that action researchers research and that they aim to improve — are their own educational practices, their understandings of these practices, and the situations in which they practice. (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 180)

While a teacher/researcher can adopt 'a disinterested stance in which any explicit concern with critically evaluating and changing the educational reality being analyzed is rejected' (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 99), such a stance is in contradiction to the purpose of education, which is to bring about change in students.

The interaction between teacher and student never occurs in a vacuum, but occurs within the social context of the classroom and the community context. Therefore, the teacher/researcher not only attempts to relate theory to practice, but to do so within the context of use:

The conducting of action research as a means of critical reflection on teaching and on the sociopolitical context in which teachers find themselves has the potential to be a major component in the continuing struggle to improve SL teaching. (Crookes 1993: 137)

Taking the social context into account also broadens the focus from what might be a more narrow concern with academic attainment to a consideration of affective and social outcomes (Calfee and Masuda, in press).

Proponents of teacher research criticize the 'division of labour between *theorists* and *practitioners*' (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 216). It has been claimed that action research is necessary to free educators from 'misconceptions systematically developed, promulgated and sustained in the dominant forms of educational research and educational policy' (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 116). It has also been asserted the research, development and diffusion

(RD &D) model has led to research and decisions about innovation being initiated by agents external to the teaching situation often without consultation with teachers (Rea-Dickens and Germaine 1992: 11). Educational policies with a top-down orientation have been criticized for accepting the validity of outside research upon which innovation should be based and assuming the willingness and ability of classroom teachers to implement such research effectively (Eisner 1986).

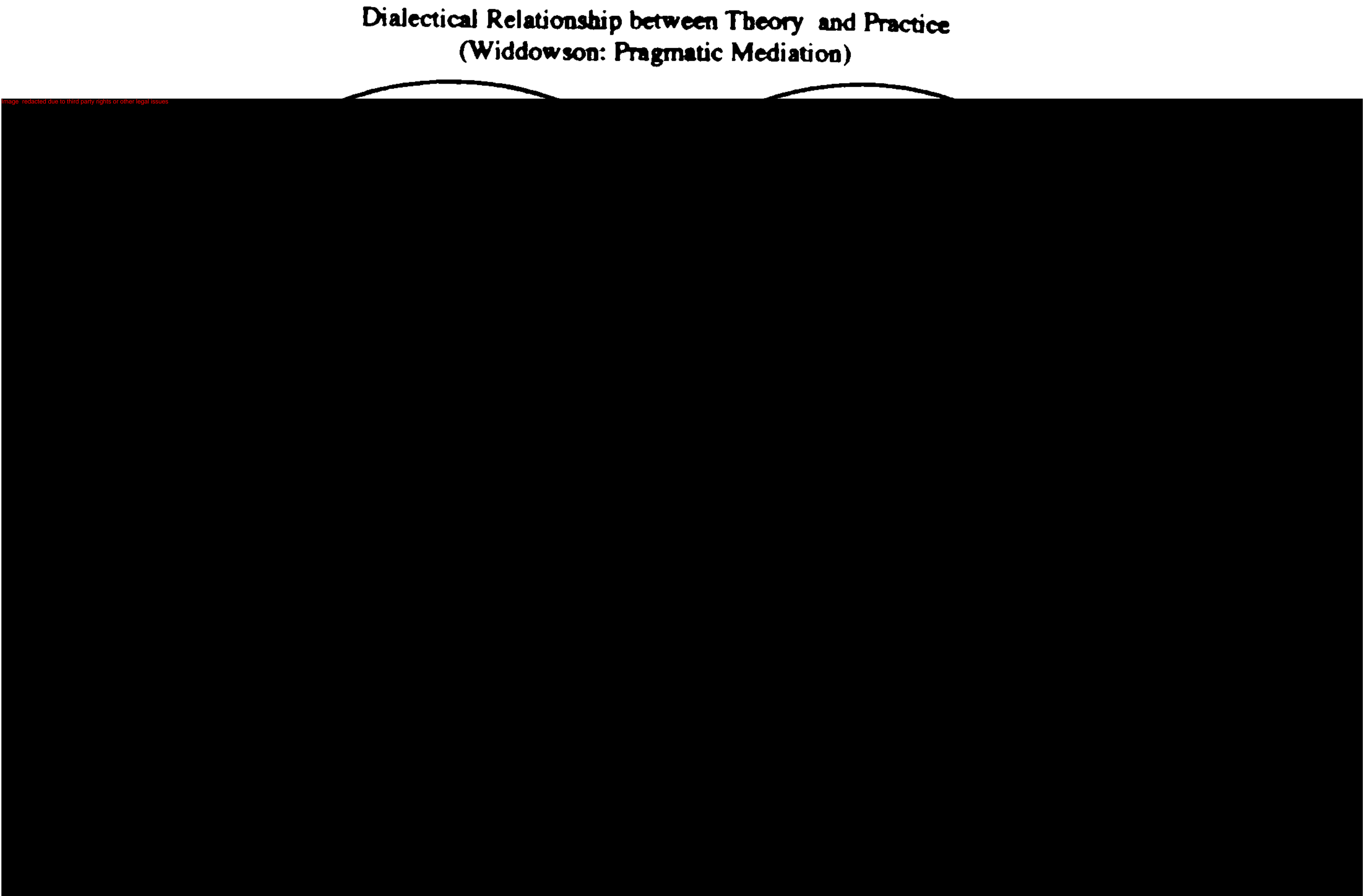
Such criticism springs from the growing conviction that classroom teachers, as members of a professional community, are capable of innovation, assessing student achievement by means of less than full-standardized methods and connecting these assessments to ongoing improvement of the instructional program (Calfee and Masuda, in press). However, teacher-initiated action research must be carefully designed, conducted, and assessed if it is to have validity.

While action research has often been based upon the premise that a group identifies a problem and then implements an action plan to improve what is happening (Kemmis and McTaggart (1988: 10), a teacher may wish or have to work alone. Most action research models contain the following steps: identification of a problem within a given context, development of a plan of action, and its implementation. Evaluation is used as the basis for a further cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Not all observations and investigations need take on the proportions of a full-scale action research project (Nunan 1991: 14).

Two other aspects should be considered when developing a teacher/research project. First of all, even if a research project is carefully constructed, not everything is worthy of research. Secondly, the most fundamental criteria for teacher research is that any efforts by teachers to consider what they do must have sufficient theoretical underpinnings. Widdowson contends that for 'teachers to generate their own ideas without reference to theory and research of a more rigorous and academic character' is insufficient. Teachers can do 'appropriate research, analogous to the notion of appropriate technology. But this does not mean that it has to be uninformed and makeshift'. While applied linguists can render insights from related areas such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education more accessible to the teacher for application and appraisal, the validity of such research 'depends on the recognition of the importance of intellectual effort and . . . [it must put] theoretical rigour at the service of practical relevance' (1990: 61).

This is not to deny the fact that teaching is both a science and an art: 'Being a good teacher is never exactly the same thing as understanding teaching; there are many things we can do well that we cannot fully understand' (Brumfit 1987: 29). However, the value of what cannot be articulated or in some sense taught only has relevance if it is recognized in reference to what can be. Therefore, although the artistry of a good teacher enhances good teaching, another cannot attempt to understand and/or emulate this without some understanding of the pedagogy of the craft (Widdowson 1990: 61).

Just as the true craftsman can make his ideas manifest in form, while at the same time recognizing the limitation of the given medium upon an expression of his concepts, in like manner the true teacher grapples with the interrelationship between theory and practice. These complex interrelationships can be diagrammed as follows:



The teacher, the central figure in the research project, is influenced by and incorporates ideas from theory while considering the needs of the actual students in the classroom. The process of problem-solving is indicated by means of Popper's typology of the identification of a problem (P1), then the formulation of and attempt to use a trial solution (TS). Whereas Popper writes of error elimination (EE), in teaching it seems more reasonable to think in terms of error analysis (EA), which would then lead to defining the next problem (P2) (Popper 1963: 47).

As classroom teaching and classroom research include multiple variables, there is rarely such a simple linear progression in learning. For example, any attempt to teach ESL literacy based upon the description of literacy developed in Chapters 2-4 necessitates attention to graphological and functional literacy, as well as the literacy of thoughtfulness — all this with an underpinning of grammar and taught with psychological as well as socio-cultural awareness of the whole class, which is made up of individuals who may have convergent as well as divergent needs. A teacher/researcher develops a theoretical construct upon which to base a syllabus, and then creates specific lesson plans. In the process of teaching, she may see the necessity to make changes when teaching a specific lesson, realize how she should modify future lessons, or even make revisions in her overall plan. Understanding the relationship between theory and practice facilitates informed choice in this process.

The actions of a teacher could be envisioned as a linear progression from P1 (problem) —> TS (trial solution) —> EA (error analysis) —> P2 (new problem). However this process is perhaps better visualized in a cyclical manner as diagrammed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1985: 14), who show a spiral progression of planning, acting and observing. Reflection then leads to the revised plan, further action and observation, reflection, and so on:



In this cyclic representation, the teacher/researcher analyzes what she has done, but rather than stopping there, progresses further, trying to develop a new trial solution and implement this in practice. While innovation may produce trial solutions, consideration or evaluation of a specific issue may also raise other issues to be examined (McNiff 1988: 45).

The teacher/researcher attempts to relate theory and practice as she identifies a problem, develops a plan of action, implements it, and then uses the evaluation as the basis for further action. Such research results expressed solely in quantitative summative terms have limited value. On the other hand, qualitative formative evaluation in the form of descriptive and explanatory statements may be potentially more valuable in understanding what innovation has been attempted, providing an assessment of how progress has occurred, and positing appropriate future action (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992: 73).

In conclusion, it seems not only possible, but appropriate for the research project to consist of an pilot adult education intermediate ESL literacy course, for which I, the teacher, will utilize the description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) as the theoretical basis for the

development, instruction, and evaluation of the course. It is therefore necessary next to consider syllabus design.

6.3. The theoretical basis for a syllabus framework

In any open-entry open-exit adult education ESL course the syllabus must be conceived of less in terms of providing rigid structure, and more as a framework of concepts to be recycled by the teacher. The pilot course will utilize the description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) as the theoretical basis for the syllabus, which is mandated to include life skills and in which the underlying precepts of adult education ESL — Americanization and/or empowerment — must be manifest.

In recent years two divergent pedagogic approaches have been articulated which influence syllabus design. To use Widdowson's terminology, the one approach has been called the *medium view*, which focuses on how meaning is transmitted through the medium of language. This stands in contrast to the *mediation perspective*, which focuses on the methodology needed to use language for the successful negotiation of meaning for communication (Widdowson 1990: 119-20). These two views of how the nature of meaning is understood have led to very different perspectives on language teaching, to different pedagogic paradigms.

Consider first the 'medium perspective':

One focuses on meaning as transmitted through the medium of language. It will concentrate on the devising of syllabuses of preplanned schemes of work based on text control whereby learners are directed by the teacher into the gradual reception of units of meaning. If the learners conform to these conditions of pedagogic transmission then they will learn the language as the code for the transmission of meaning. Nonconformity is negatively evaluated as error. (Widdowson 1990:122)

If the 'meaning' of a communication is a semantic matter of encoding and decoding messages by reference to linguistic knowledge, then meaning is transmitted through the semantic medium of the language. From a medium perspective, syllabus design is important in that here linguistic units are specified and ordered. The medium perspective provides for a gradual accumulation of units of meaning, initially in controlled texts where what might be naturally occurring language is controlled to make it simpler and more accessible. In this process the learner is dependent upon the teacher to transmit information in an ordered and sequential fashion for future use. While the units may be presented as formal, notional, or functional, they are conceived of as units of communication and the result is a structural or notional/functional syllabus. This approach is similar to traditional classroom language learning based on a systematic introduction of aspects of the language with an emphasis on grammatically correct language.

However, the medium perspective stands in contrast to the way most Mexican ESL students have learned English in California — namely in the work place and in the daily round where the successful negotiation of meaning enabling communication is of far

greater importance than being grammatically correct. This experience is more similar to Widdowson's second possibility:

The other perspective focuses on methodology, the instigation of classroom activity, allows for more exposure to language by guiding the learning by means of task control, provides for the exploitation of previous experience and for the exercise of initiative on the part of the learner. Nonconformity is positively evaluated as the achievement of an interim interlanguage. (Widdowson 1990:122)

This pedagogical paradigm is also more in accord with the description of literacy, in which systemic knowledge of the language system must be united with schematic knowledge so that negotiation of meaning may take place. What one does with language results in meaning, for 'communication is a function of activity which engages language for the achievement of purposeful outcomes' (Widdowson 1990: 120). In the organization of any language for learning, the mediation view leads to a perspective very different from the formerly more prominent medium perspective.

ESL students in the adult education ESL program instinctively know what procedures are used to mediate meaning in L1 and use these to negotiate meaning in L2. Students are constantly confronted in daily life, in the work place, and in the community with situations in which meaning is negotiated through varying amounts of spoken English, sign language, and Spanish. It becomes apparent that meaning is not uniquely signaled through the medium of language, for students come to communicate quite effectively from a mediation point of view in spite of numerous errors (e.g. pronunciation [and its written equivalent — spelling], grammar, syntax) from a medium perspective. From the mediation point of view ESL students use language during the day to do things of immediate concern. This informal approach to language learning taking place outside the classroom is simply carried a step further in class where the teacher is not just a transmitter of information, but rather an enabler of oral communicative competence and literacy.

In a content-based curriculum focusing upon life skills, a student's experiences outside the classroom provide valuable input, as does the English he has picked up in the daily round. In an open-entry open-exit intermediate ESL literacy course an ordered sequence of lessons in a preplanned syllabus is of limited usefulness for reasons already enumerated. The pedagogical technique of *recycling* is much more appropriate. This does not mean teaching the same thing again and again, but rather means that within a content-based unit (e.g. law and society) the topics of individual lessons evoke language in a regular way through use. Elements of grammar are introduced if and when appropriate. For example, word order of interrogative sentences could be recycled in reference to different reading selections, writing assignments, and topics for discussion.

If the content of a lesson focuses upon racial or gender discrimination, examining this idea is just as important as writing grammatically correct questions about the topic. If communication is important, then contributions which reflect understanding and thoughtfulness are valued positively even if they may not always be expressed in a way that

conforms to the norm of grammatical accuracy. In this process, language becomes the medium of instruction through which meaning is mediated. In language pedagogy 'language is a medium for the demonstration of meaning potential but this can only be realized by mediation' (Widdowson 1990: 123).

The open-entry open-exit syllabus provides a framework in which grammar or the meaning potential of linguistic units can be specified. It also provides the systemic knowledge for negotiating meaning through use of schematic knowledge of the ESL student's new world. A life-skills syllabus is essentially content-based. Unlike teachers in programs where students must have completed prerequisite courses before enrolling in an intermediate level course, an adult intermediate ESL teacher in an open-entry open-exit classroom cannot assume that a student has mastered material covered previously or even that the student has had any formal ESL instruction at all. Rather the teacher must make a quick inventory of a student's strengths and weaknesses on the first day of attendance. How this might be done will also be considered as a component of syllabus design.

The ESL teacher must be responsive to the needs of an immigrant population. In terms of a traditional grammatical or notional/functional syllabus, students may need a sequence of factual bits which would eventually lead to fluency in the language. With a content-based curriculum the focus could incorporate systematic knowledge of the language with Americanization, perceived as conformity to the status quo and an understanding as to why things have been done as they are and should continue to be done that way — such as voting for individuals who 'preserve the American way of life'. But such an approach denies a thoughtful, critical, and responsible consideration of issues involved in a participatory democracy and negates the importance of each individual's coming to some realization of what is implied in what the Buddhists call *right action*. When the literacy of thoughtfulness is an aspect of a content-based program, the ESL teacher has a responsibility not only to provide what she thinks students may need but also to guide them in an exploration of topics and ideas which they want to study.

The theoretical differences between the medium perspective and the mediation view can also be contrasted with reference to the strategies a teacher would use. To use American parlance, a teacher adopting a medium perspective, who believes that she is to teach language in units of meaning which will lead to the mastery of the code for the transmission of meaning, may see her role as being *the sage on the stage*. In contrast, a teacher using the mediation view as a point of departure would cease to perceive herself as *the sage on the stage* but would come to understand the importance of being *a guide on the side* involved in pedagogic mediation. This is not to say that in the latter case the teacher abdicates an active role in the learning process for if students could learn just as fast without formal tuition, there would be no need for educators.

Teachers attempting to incorporate the above features into their instruction come to conceive of a syllabus as 'a set of bearings for the plotting of their own course in a lesson sequence, and for the realization of aspects of language and learning which the syllabus of

its nature cannot account for' (Widdowson 1990: 154). In this sense a syllabus provides a construct to which the teacher refers in lesson planning and in the actual process of teaching. Although learners can indicate their preferences and needs, the teacher needs to be able in her own mind to determine what she wants to teach and why. It is such parameters that a syllabus framework can provide.

The American adult education ESL instructor must also take educational mandates (Chapter 5) into account. The extensive American provisions for adult basic ESL instruction are grounded in a conviction that literacy leads to Americanization and/or empowerment. Therefore the two pedagogic paradigms under consideration — the medium and mediation perspectives must also be considered with reference to these two purported consequences of literacy.

Proponents of ESL instruction for Americanization taking the medium perspective have argued that mastering English is vital, for America can only remain a melting pot if all people are united by one official language through which meaning is transmitted. This is a core idea among those Americans who today want English to be declared the national language. The medium perspective is also often favored by those supporting the more academic community college ESL programs, in which English is seen as the necessary medium through which future vocational skills and training or academic knowledge will later be imparted (Keller-Cohen and Wolfe: 1987).

Proponents of ESL instruction for empowerment would argue that the mediation perspective predicates individuals becoming empowered in a society not only by knowing the dominant language (which carries with it prestige, access and power) but also by becoming involved as active members of a participatory democracy. Thus students will gain an understanding of political and socio-economic issues, be compassionate enough to act for the good of the nation, and be bold enough to embrace change if it is in the best interest of the American people. This more liberal perspective favors literacy as a means of empowerment of all individuals in a nation, be they immigrants or native born. From this perspective communication occurs when the English language is used for 'the achievement of purposeful outcomes' (Widdowson 1990:120). This view underlies the theoretical foundation for the content-based curriculum traditionally used in adult education ESL instruction — a curriculum based on the belief that immigrants should not only be taught what it means to be an American, but also how to become literate members of a participatory democracy.

It would, however, be simplistic to say that Americanization and empowerment are mutually exclusive categories. It has been argued that pedagogical mediation provides the appropriate model for the syllabus design of an experimental adult ESL literacy course in an open-entry open-exit program which favors helping individuals learn English as quickly as possible considering their past educational background and present constraints upon learning. Implicit in this model is a belief in the empowerment of the learner. However, when the syllabus framework of the pilot course is developed, it will become clear that the

emphasis placed upon Americanization and/or empowerment is directly related to the educational objectives of specific aspects of the course.

The resultant innovative syllabus framework based upon the recycling of concepts bears similarities to the process syllabus (Breen 1987, White 1988). However, while tasks are used, these are content-based due to educational mandates.

6.4. Recycling concepts: An innovative approach to syllabus design

The Santa Barbara Adult Education ESL program mandates a life-skills curriculum. As the open-entry open-exit policy precludes syllabus design in the traditional sense, the resultant syllabus is most appropriately conceived of as 'a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning (Widdowson 1984: 26).

As any syllabus is by nature selective and not all-encompassing, this framework does not include all possible literacy uses. However, the items selected reflect what the teacher/researcher has found through experience to be most important for inclusion in an intermediate ESL level course for young adult Mexican immigrants. The content focus will be upon the development of the three aspects of literacy — the mechanical skills of graphological literacy, the functional skills needed to operate within the society, and those processes which enable an individual to be a thoughtful member of society (Chapters 2-4).

Although grammar plays a lesser part in adult education than at the community college level, it is nevertheless a mandated part of the curriculum (Chapter 5.4). Grammar can be seen as an underlying and recurrent thread, as knowledge of the language system is necessary to communicate schematic conceptual knowledge.

A given lesson may focus more directly upon one aspect of literacy or grammar, but more often than not these factors are considered in an interrelated way. Americanization and empowerment are both of importance within the four sections of the syllabus, which might be formulated as follows.

Graphological literacy involves handwriting, spelling, and punctuation. Mastery of each of these aspects involves conforming to the norm in the United States and therefore can be conceived of as contributing to Americanization. However, mastery of these skills is also empowering, for only when these things can be done correctly does a student communicate effectively through use of the written word.

Handwriting is an important part of literacy for how one presents oneself on paper is analogous to the way one presents oneself in person — neatness and some conformity to the norms of the society are advantageous if one is trying to give a positive impression. While some ESL teachers may not feel that conformity to the standard American way of forming printed letters is important, learning to write alphabet letters according to the accepted norm is relatively easy and certainly less difficult for most than learning to speak without an accent. Learning how to print letters correctly is often the focus of much work

in pre-literacy ESL textbooks, but by the intermediate level this skill is rarely emphasized. As many intermediate students have had no previous formal instruction, mastery of the American mode of manuscript printing must be included in the curriculum. If students are given a sample alphabet for reference and if the teacher not only prints correctly herself but also makes any necessary corrections on written work, students become aware of the American norm. Letters that have a different standard form in Mexico and the United States — such as the small *a*, *f*, and *r* — must be consistently corrected; this can be done by the teacher printing a correct sample of any inadequately formed letter in upper and lower case on the bottom of a page of written work. In penmanship the benefits of forming the letters according to the American norm (or Americanization) far outweigh any disadvantages.

Since virtually no Mexicans know cursive, it is introduced in the middle of the year because by then most students who started in the fall have learned how to print letters correctly. Although the majority of students will never need to write cursive, learning how to write it enables them to read handwritten notes from American employers, most of whom write in cursive. An instructional student workbook (Koschnick: 1983) enables the teacher to devote a certain amount of time in each class period to introducing the formation of a new letter or two. This makes it possible for students to work at their own rate, and those students who cannot attend class regularly can work at home and not fall behind.

Spelling involves the ability to form words according to the American norm. The inclusion of spelling in the curriculum is based on the assumption that it can be taught (Appendix 6.1). While a misspelled word might well be understood by the reader, it positions the writer as less literate, which among most individuals implies a value judgment. Therefore, an emphasis on teaching spelling is not just one of demanding conformity for the sake of conformity — or Americanization. Rather, correct spelling and acceptable penmanship both have socio-cultural value and are, therefore, empowering.

In addition to poor English spelling, most of the Mexican ESL students have a weak grasp of the concept of a sentence, for limited literacy students have not gained familiarity with the norm of the sentence by reading in L1 or L2. As most limited literacy students write Spanish or English as they would speak it in long run-on collections of phrases in Spanish and English, they must learn to write short complete sentences. Rather than separate lessons on the concept of the sentence, in the open-entry open-exit class the features of a complete sentence and its punctuation are intermittently reviewed before students begin a writing assignment in class. The paragraph is an equally elusive concept. Attention can be directed to its use in texts read in class while instructing students to indent the first line of a new paragraph when writing. The formatting of the text in a business letter and an employment form are also emphasized. Mastery of sentences, paragraphs, and document formatting all emphasize conformity to a norm, again showing how Americanization is a prerequisite for empowerment.

In summary, in an open-entry open-exit ESL course, the graphological focus is upon penmanship, spelling, and punctuation, as well as the use of sentences and

paragraphs. These aspects are recycled with emphasis upon conformity to the American norm — Americanization, as it were. While a mastery of these mechanical skills ultimately empowers a student in the area of graphological literacy, the correct manipulation of forms is not to be seen as a discrete aspect of literacy or an end in and of itself. Within the mediation view, graphological literacy is interrelated with functional literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness in the development of communicative competence in the written mode.

Functional literacy, the second aspect of literacy, theoretically includes all those texts an individual must read and write using graphological literacy in order to operate effectively within the community. Gaining the schematic knowledge needed to function within a society can be the goal of Americanization but such understanding can also lead to empowerment as a student comes to understand the limitations as well as the possibilities existent within the society. In highly technological societies such as the United States, written texts have become so complex that even a university graduate cannot always understand every text encountered (e.g. the long US personal income tax form). It is obviously unrealistic to posit that an intermediate ESL student will acquire the ability to read critically and understand everything he sees in print. Rather, focus at this level is upon those life skills the teacher considers to be important as well as interesting for a given class. Topics such as employment, finances, utility company billing structures, family and health issues, as well as civics and government form the basis of a content-based curriculum. That is to say, the material that students read and the information they learn are as important, if not in some cases more important, than the actual literacy acts themselves.

The first of the areas mentioned above is employment. While most of the students are employed and find new jobs by word of mouth, many have not systematically thought through the advantages and disadvantages of working for different employers in terms of pay scale, benefits, and opportunities for advancement by learning new skills and English.

Finances are also an important area, because most students come from rural Mexico where their parents operate in a cash or barter economy. The issue may not be what to write on what line of a check, but rather whether one should open a checking or savings account, how to do it, and what the comparative advantages and disadvantages are. Students must also learn to understand the information given on their pay stubs [payslips], for many do not understand what deductions are taken out and why. Most immigrant students initially do their financial transactions in cash, but with time they open bank accounts so they have some need to learn about banking and automatic teller machines, and eventually about credit cards.

Utility bills and phone bills have to be paid. In the United States understanding the billing structure can assist students in cutting costs, as utility rates are based on a sliding scale with 2-4 price brackets. For example, using a little water in excess of the basic allotment may not double, but actually quadruple a water bill in Southern California. Also, American consumers have a choice of long distance telephone carriers offering a variety of programs. Calling at the cheapest time of day with the right program can halve telephone

bills, which are often high for limited L1 literacy students, who frequently call rather than write home.

Some discussion of health issues is important. Through teacher observations, class discussions, and written work, it has become apparent that most of the students do not smoke, drink little, and take few if any drugs. However, the young males, who make up the majority of the students, usually know very little about birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, and AIDS. There has also been a resurgence of tuberculosis in Mexico and, consequently, also in Southern California. Bilingual outside speakers are invited to speak about these subjects, and they often hand out written materials in Spanish and English. Information can be reviewed and discussed using simple ESL teacher-generated texts.

Civics, including information on government and history, has been a part of Americanization programs for almost 100 years. The extent to which it is a required part of the curriculum is dependent upon the number of enrolled students seeking to pass the history and civics examinations for citizenship, at present about 25% of the class. Basic information such as the three branches of government, the responsibilities and terms of elected officials, and information about major historical figures and events are periodically recycled.

The civics focus for the curriculum of the research project will be an extended unit on law and society (Chapter 7). Current events are also incorporated when applicable. Bi-national issues, particularly those potentially affecting immigration such as the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] are discussed. The value and importance of voting in a participatory democracy is considered. Mock elections are then held at the time of local, state, and national elections in America and the Mexican presidential elections. This format provides an opportunity to discuss the concept of democratic elections, particularly since purported manipulation of election results by the Mexican Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI] for over half a century has resulted in an apathetic Mexican electorate and Mexican immigrants who question the value of voting in any election. A mock trial is also conducted at least twice a year in an actual courtroom of the Santa Barbara County Court House to help students understand the American court system.

Document processing is a functional literacy skill utilized in class enrollment forms, driver's license applications, job applications, and so on. At some time during the course each student learns how to complete a complex job application form, enabling him to organize and effectively present résumé information, which could be used when applying for a new job in the future. As the visual appearance of the final product is stressed, students are taught to fill out such forms in pencil (so corrections can be made) and then photocopy the form (so that the final product looks as though it were done in pen). Choosing what information to include and how to articulate it incorporates functional literacy, as well as graphological literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness.

Lesson focus can vary from topic to topic. If emphasis were simply placed upon vocabulary, grammar and syntax, this would be indicative of a medium perspective. Grammar and graphological literacy are not just discrete and free-standing elements, but rather they serve functional literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness. Such a mediation perspective is built into the design of the course framework.

At one level all areas of functional literacy provide the foundation for a content-based curriculum, and topics could be presented simply with a view to Americanization so that immigrants know how American society works. At another level, the same material could be used to aid students in understanding the implications of doing things a certain way, not only in American society but also in their native country. This second option could empower them to see that the decisions they and other individuals can make influence how a society develops. From this perspective, the interconnection between functional literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness puts emphasis upon enabling and empowering students rather than simply Americanizing them.

The literacy of thoughtfulness, the third aspect of literacy, is important for all individuals. Even if ESL students lack the skills for critical textual analysis or analytical writing in the academic sense, this does not preclude inclusion of mentally challenging and thought-provoking assignments in which even limited literacy students can be successful if certain factors are taken into account. The literacy of thoughtfulness could be considered in terms of developing metacognitive thinking skills. For example, De Bono's PMI technique (Chapter 4.4) of considering what is good, bad, and interesting about something to clarify one's thinking before making a decision could be taught as a discrete, isolated skill.

Instruction of this aspect of literacy may be more effective if it is related to some aspect of a content-based curriculum taking the following factors into account: the topic must be one the students understand; second, prewriting activities are important, particularly for generating vocabulary that the students may need; third, a reading activity involving a teacher-generated essay or questionnaire can reinforce vocabulary previously discussed; fourth, the literacy of thoughtfulness may involve a variety of kinds of writing — filling in questionnaires, making notes, or writing a text. Such activities can be done individually or in groups. Occasional group writing projects are useful, especially if the teacher anticipates that a high level of literacy will be necessary to complete the assignment. Most adult ESL classes have some students with high oral communicative competence (but usually limited literacy skills) and others with the opposite combination, so that an assignment requiring the exposition of complex ideas provides a good opportunity for students with different capabilities to work in groups.

The literacy of thoughtfulness can be related to most of the areas considered under functional literacy. For example, when discussing employment opportunities, students could consider the advantages, disadvantages and interesting aspects involved in taking a job where one could only speak English, but which paid a little less than one's present job.

Teacher-generated essays about major current event topics such as the riots and court cases resulting from the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles not only provide reading practice, but can be followed by thought-provoking questionnaires on a subject such as discrimination, thus stimulating thoughtfulness while requiring a limited amount of literacy. In this way, the literacy of thoughtfulness is also related to cross-cultural issues.

While this highest form of literacy is often considered with reference to critical thinking, creativity is also an important aspect (Chapter 4). Limited literacy students from very traditional educational backgrounds, who have not had much experience reading fiction and/or considering alternative endings for stories in the classroom may have difficulty with creative writing assignments. Sometimes reading an appropriate children's book can be a helpful prewriting activity. Brainstorming about what might happen in hypothetical situations or considering how one might imaginatively write fiction or non-fiction by generating word lists of possible adjectives, verbs, and adverbs to describe a character can also be helpful. Creative writing assignments can often be related to the holidays. For example, before Christmas students can be given copies of the *Dear Virginia* letter written almost 100 years ago by a newspaper editor to an American child in response to her question as to whether Santa Claus was real. Such an assignment would include not only developing ideas, but also figuring out how best to express them in the form of a letter to a child.

In the next chapter writing assignments in a unit on law and society will be discussed, showing how the literacy of thoughtfulness can be included for ESL students who, in spite of their limited literacy, can be challenged by well-constructed thought-provoking assignments. In conclusion, the main thrust of the literacy of thoughtfulness could be said to be empowerment.

In addition to these three aspects of literacy, the student is also mandated to acquire some command of the language system. Grammar, the systemic knowledge of the language system, provides the vehicle for expressing thought. As a sequential structural syllabus is not appropriate for an open-entry open-exit program, emphasis is placed upon major errors which keep recurring in intermediate ESL instruction such as the conjugation of verbs, the use of the definite and indefinite article, comparison of adjectives, and prepositions — all requiring the appropriate word order (Appendix 6.2).

The recycling of key grammar concepts is especially important in open-entry open-exit programs. Since ESL students with little formal education learned English by speaking it, they make repeated errors in certain grammatical constructions, leading to fossilized errors that are difficult to eradicate. Recycling enables a teacher to focus upon the most commonly used aspects of grammar again and again. While grammar cannot be ignored, neither should it dominate the syllabus to the exclusion of topics discussed so far with regard to literacy. A grammar point is sometimes best taught as a separate lesson, but content-based assignments may also be designed to emphasize a particular aspect of grammar that has previously caused difficulty.

Mastering grammar facilitates Americanization. A command of the grammar and syntax of a language is ultimately enabling and empowering when this systemic knowledge is combined with schematic knowledge so that successful negotiation of meaning can occur both orally and in writing. From the mediation perspective, grammar and the three facets of literacy are not to be seen as discrete elements but as interrelated aspects. Yet an incorporation of these elements is appropriate only to the extent to which this meets the needs of the students in a given class. Each two hour lesson is designed to incorporate some activity in each of these four main areas.

The course framework can be outlined as follows:

COURSE FRAMEWORK FOR ADULT EDUCATION OPEN-ENTRY OPEN-EXIT INTERMEDIATE ESL CLASS

Graphological Literacy

- Handwriting
 - Printing manuscript alphabet in upper and lower case according to the American norm
 - Introduction to cursive
- Spelling
 - Long and short vowel sounds
 - Spelling modifications needed when adding suffixes
- The concept of the sentence and its punctuation
- The concept of the paragraph

Functional Literacy

- Prose literacy skills
- Document processing skills

The Literacy of Thoughtfulness

- Creative and critical thinking

Content Areas for Functional Literacy and the Literacy of Thoughtfulness

- Life Skills
 - Employment opportunities
 - Finances: Bank and checking accounts, payroll deductions, utility bills, telephone options
 - Health: Contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, TB
- US History/Civics
 - US Constitution, voting, law and society, current events

Grammar

- Verb conjugations, definite and indefinite articles, comparison of adjectives, prepositions, word order

Note: All these areas can be approached from the vantage point of Americanization and/or empowerment.

This framework is based upon the construct of literacy (Chapters 2-4), but differs from what might be expected in a syllabus because of the open-entry open-exit component. Specific day-by-day or week-by-week lessons plans are not indicated for a number of reasons. As students can enter a class that is ongoing at any time throughout the year and as

attendance is irregular, it is impossible to develop a set syllabus in which, for example, the work done in week three was based upon work done in week one. The teacher must also constantly modify lessons to meet the needs of the students present on a given day most effectively. While the majority of the students move to the advanced class after about a year (consisting of 4 terms of about 10 weeks each), at least 1/3 of the students are in the class for two years. Topics are chosen which can be addressed repeatedly in a number of different ways through use of teacher-generated materials. Consequently general topics may remain the same, but specific lessons must be modified so that a student who needs more time to increase his literacy never feels he is just repeating a class, but experiences new challenges.

In conclusion, the teacher/researcher paradigm has been chosen and a syllabus framework has been developed. The emphasis of teacher research is less upon summative evaluative judgments focusing upon the outcomes of the project and more upon formative evaluation which seeks an understanding of what has happened in the process of teaching the pilot course. Now a way must now be found to document what will occur within the classroom and evaluate its efficacy.

6.5. Evaluation through use of student portfolios

Traditionally much educational research has been built upon a paradigm which assigns specialists the job of studying teaching and learning so that quantifiable variables can be identified which have a predictable effect on students. Empirical testability requires that a generalization incorporated in a scientific theory has the logical standing of an empirical hypothesis. Its validity must be verified by measuring deductive implications against observed results. This paradigm assumes the usefulness of precision and control in measurement of quantitative research in education (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 119).

However, the description of the research setting and proposed syllabus herein involves multiple variables defying quantification. If a project can be evaluated using

multiple sources of data, multiple forms of representation, and the use of multiple intelligences, we are inclined to eschew single outcomes. Statistical comparisons may be relevant for some outcomes but surely not for the ones we are likely to care about the most. (Eisner 1990: 100)

When the educational research isolates only one factor which can be measured, the focus is often upon such a narrow problem that the research loses the broader perspective — namely that teaching involves the dynamic interaction between teacher and students, including multiple factors some of which can only be measured with difficulty, if at all (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 218).

The goal of most teacher research is 'to observe the effects of action in the context in which it occurs and to reflect on these effects as the basis for further planning, subsequent action, and so on through a succession of cycles' (Kemmis and McTaggart 1982: 7). Consequently quantitative summative evaluation of only one aspect of the project

may be less appropriate than qualitative formative evaluation, in which data gathered over time is evaluated on an ongoing basis, and used to improve classroom practice throughout the course of the research project (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992).

Researchers have used quantitative formative evaluation in more traditional academic settings, where students enter the class with a minimal level of competency, attend regularly, do required homework throughout the term, and can be held accountable for what they have been taught. However, the Santa Barbara Adult Education ESL program posed specific client/site restraints upon the research project (Chapter 5). These influenced not only syllabus design, but also possible modes of evaluation.

Santa Barbara Adult Education had only one intermediate ESL class of primarily Mexican students, so there could not be a control group. The students had a wide range of abilities, having been placed in the class because of L2 literacy or L2 oral communicative competence. If the program had had separate writing and conversation classes, a few educated students would have tested into an intermediate ESL writing class but they may have been placed in a beginning ESL conversation class. The majority of the students had limited L1/L2 literacy and would have been placed in a beginning ESL writing class but at least an intermediate ESL writing class. Consequently a written pre-test would have been useful to assess why students, who entered the class on ongoing basis throughout the term, had been placed at the intermediate level. However, it was impossible to give each incoming student such a written test, because he might well lack the necessary literacy.

It was also against the adult education ESL policy to require regular attendance, require homework, or to give tests or grades. As a result it would not have been possible to utilize summative evaluation through testing measurement or an analysis of the statistical significance of test results. Adult education students were to be encouraged on the basis of their individual progress (regardless of how minimal) rather than to be assessed against a preset norm. Even if testing had been allowed, fluctuating attendance (caused more often by work and family responsibilities than lack of interest) would have made it difficult to assess quantitatively the progress made by the class as a whole.

The teacher/researcher also confronted certain site constraints which influenced interaction with students. As the school was unlocked only during school hours, it was not possible to conduct individual interviews before or after class and since the limited literacy students always needed help during writing assignments, it did not seem appropriate to use class time to conduct individual interviews. Permission was not given the teacher to make audio recordings and/or videotapes of classroom interaction. It was also not possible to involve outside personnel for video-taping, COLT type observation schemes (e.g. Spada 1987), or interviews — all of which may have altered the learning environment.

The teacher/researcher consequently had to devise a method of evaluation, which would take into account the fluctuating student population with diverse educational backgrounds, the different levels of L2 literacy and oral communicative competence, and the irregular attendance patterns. Portfolio analysis — a method any teacher could use in

any setting — would allow the teacher/research project to follow the basic steps in formative evaluation including gathering data over time, evaluating it on an ongoing basis, and utilizing findings to improve classroom practice throughout the course (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992). Individual portfolios, which contained a complete record of each student's work, appeared to be the best way to document and then evaluate the extent to which the pilot course, as it evolved over time, had assisted students, individually and as a whole, to become more literate.

As literacy had been posited to consist of mechanical and functional literacy as well as the literacy of thoughtfulness (Chapters 2-4), formative evaluation would enable the teacher/researcher to consider the different facets of each student's emergent L2 literacy on an ongoing basis within actual contexts of use, as well as to assess how the pilot research project had influenced his acquisition of literacy. It was posited that ongoing formative evaluation, which involved gathering and assessing data over time, would raise awareness of and bring about improvements in classroom practice (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992: 55). In this process the strengths and weaknesses of both the teaching and learning process could be analyzed and modified as needed.

While formative evaluation may more adequately describe the process of learning, the problem of generalizability and applicability remains, as it does in all forms of social research. However, sufficiently 'thick description' or extensive contextual background information coupled with descriptive and/or explanatory statements can enable a reader to understand what has happened in the classroom and to analyze the extent to which the approach could be implemented and/or the project could be replicated with similar results. The reader can then make an informed decision as to the generalizability and the utility of the study (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992: 73). Such qualitative research can potentially be of more value for the classroom teacher than qualitative research which in the past led has led to educational policies with a top-down orientation, where the underlying (and often fallacious) assumption has been that teachers in classrooms could and would effectively implement such research in their classrooms (Eisner 1986).

Since the mid-1980s there has been growing interest and research into the use of portfolios as a means of student assessment, for student portfolios can provide a systematic and organized collection of evidence to be utilized by both the teacher and student to monitor growth of the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes (Seger 1982, Vavrus 1990). In primary school settings, a child's portfolio might contain a combination of art work and simple text, whereas at the university level a student's writing portfolio might include multiple drafts of fiction and non-fiction (Graves and Sunstein 1992, Knight and Gallaro 1994, Paris and Ayres 1994). Portfolios can include all the work a student has done or may contain a representative selection. What is included in any portfolio is always to some degree determined by what will be assessed, but assessment can also be seen as a curriculum matter, for 'coming up with a portfolio . . . is choosing what to teach' (Murphy and Smith 1990: 1). As a student's written work provides evidence of what has been

taught, in what way, and how successfully as well giving an indication of what the student needs next, it becomes apparent that curriculum, instruction, and assessment intersect via portfolios.

It was decided that an intermediate adult education ESL student's portfolio should contain photocopies of all written work because this would give the most complete documentation of emergent literacy. A complete portfolio would enable the teacher/researcher to reread papers and to assess them in comparison with work done before and after, because aspects of the work might become apparent during such ongoing evaluation that might not have been noticed initially. Each student would also have an ongoing record of his work and a visual account of how he was progressing because the originals would always be corrected and returned to the student by the following class period.

Portfolios would document the curriculum by indicating the extent to which the syllabus framework had been followed. Portfolios would also chronicle instruction by showing how lessons had been structured and modified on the basis of an assessment of student work. An intake needs assessment questionnaire would facilitate assessment of initial L1/L2 literacy. Spelling tests would specifically test spelling and verb forms. Writing lessons would document student's emergent literacy, but could also augment literacy profiles. This would shed light upon the impact of the student's background and the efficacy of the approach for students with diverse needs. Course evaluation questionnaires would enable the student to assess what he had learned and how. These could also be analyzed by the teacher/researcher to judge the efficacy of the project.

Needs analysis intake questionnaires: Almost every day a new student entered the adult education intermediate ESL class. Placement was based upon a short eight-question ESL written test and the site tester's subjective evaluation of a student's L2 oral communicative competence (Appendix 7.1). A student could be placed at the intermediate level because of L2 literacy and/or oral communicative competence. Therefore the teacher/researcher needed a quick and effective way to evaluate each student upon entrance and to assess how any new students might influence the instructional needs of the whole class.

The teacher-generated questionnaire, which was modified many times until it reached its final form, contained English and Spanish sections to facilitate a quick evaluation of a new student's strengths and weaknesses in terms of L1 and L2 literacy.¹ The English portion would indicate not only how well a student could read and write English, but would also provide information about the student's educational background (including ESL), employment, and home situation. This would enable the teacher/researcher to assess the student's literacy needs and uses in L2 and would provide more personal information about the student. The Spanish section would also provide background information, while encouraging the student to express himself in L1 (Chapter 1.5).

Spelling tests: Irregular verb spelling tests would indicate the degree to which the student was learning the verb forms and mastering spelling — especially the orthographic changes needed when suffixes are added. A record of quantified test results alone would not have indicated what kinds of errors were being made. Had the student simply not known the words? Had he made a variety of spelling errors indicating lack of understanding of any phonics generalizations? Or had he consistently made the same error indicating there was a certain concept he did not understand?

As students had very disparate levels of literacy, they worked to improve on their own 'best score' (like a 'best time' in swimming), rather than being graded in comparison with others. Furthermore, a complete portfolio would enable a comparison of the spelling on tests with spelling done in essays to see whether students could carry over the spelling of words and phonics generalizations learned for irregular verb tests to writing text.

Literacy lessons: Pilot lessons were based upon the syllabus framework (Chapter 6.4). All involved reading and writing and most were designed to enable students to write text — whole sentences in a paragraph. The aim was to create lessons which even the least literate could successfully complete, but which would also challenge the most able. An initial list of questions or an activity embedded the most necessary vocabulary. A sample text contained the necessary grammar and syntax. This provided a model for the student's own essay. An evaluation of each lesson provided ideas for the next lesson to make it more effective and slightly more complex while also incorporating the three aspects of literacy. Some lessons were specifically designed to augment the literacy profiles of the students.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires were designed to encourage students to become more actively involved in their learning by considering what they had learned, how they had done so, and what they needed to learn in the future. These questionnaires would also provide additional material for the literacy profile of each student by revealing information about the student's learning processes and how he perceived the course and the instructor.

Student input is an important aspect of the evaluation procedures (Nunan 1988). While some educators advocate active student involvement in syllabus development, helpful input is predicated upon students not only knowing what they have found useful and/or want, but also knowing what they need. Most of the Mexican students in the research project were not knowledgeable as to what alternatives in syllabus design might exist, but a well-constructed questionnaire given in the middle of a term could elicit information not only about what students might like to learn next, but also about what they found helpful in terms of content as well as classroom organization. Also included were questions about learning styles and how much students thought they comprehended in various situations involving orality and literacy. The aim was to enable the student to be thoughtful about how he learned and encourage his active involvement in the learning process. The teacher would give careful consideration to his comments and incorporate them as appropriate into ongoing lesson planning based upon the recycling of certain concepts. Past experience had shown that students tended to be very honest even if they put

their names on the questionnaires, perhaps because they received no grades and/or they were not educationally sophisticated. The primary difference between students' perceptions might be that some might rank themselves and the class more positively, whereas others might be more negative.² Since the only formal quantitative evaluation of the student throughout the term was the weekly irregular verb test (Appendix 6.4), the mid-term questionnaire would help the teacher understand how a student evaluated his own oral comprehension, written work, learning style, and the worth of various classroom activities. Student evaluation will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

Literacy profiles: It was posited that portfolios would also be useful in developing literacy profiles. Questionnaires and essays can provide information about a student's childhood literacy practices, educational background, L1 literacy and transferable skills, present L2 literacy, and future literacy needs. Students learned to write in a non-graded and non-threatening environment using essays about the teacher/researcher's life as a model. It was hypothesized on the basis of having taught such students for a number of years that they would be quite honest, candid, and open. In spite of their limited literacy they might over time reveal more about themselves in their essays than they would have to an outside interviewer (Ochs 1988, Janes 1995). Such literacy profiles would help lead to an understanding of the impact of the pilot program upon the students, who varied widely in L2 communicative competence, literacy, and progress made during the course. L1 literacy and education might be a greater factor in the L2 literacy learning curve than L2 oral communicative competence.

Final evaluation occurred at the end of each term. Portfolios provided a record of student progress which could be reviewed by both the teacher/researcher and the student. Students could see their progress on spelling tests, where the goal was to improve upon previous performance. By looking through a whole portfolio a student could see how he had progressed in the acquisition of English literacy. This would be much more valuable than a letter grade because limited literacy ESL students with little formal education were often initially apprehensive about coming to class and sometimes lacked confidence in their academic abilities. Portfolios could help students understand that there was nothing wrong with limited L1/L2 literacy, that their willingness to learn was not only valued by the teacher but that it had led to individual progress. This became apparent to students if they reflected upon their own written work rather than comparing themselves with others or trying to reach a pre-established norm. This affective dimension of learning is an important factor with such students, because their commitment to continuing their education in spite of significant family and work place demands upon their time is influenced by their confidence in their ability to learn.

The portfolios were also used by the teacher/researcher to determine (in consultation with the student) whether he should continue at the same level or whether he should move to an easier or a more difficult class. It was also possible for a student to move up or down during a term, particularly if he was incorrectly assessed upon entering the program. Most

students remained with one teacher throughout the year. Then the majority of students moved up to the next level, but limited literacy students often preferred to repeat, particularly at the intermediate and advanced levels. No stigma was attached to being a repeater as there might be if a student were held back a year in primary or secondary school. While a teacher could make class placement recommendations, in open-entry open-exit there is no exclusionary policy and students can try out higher and lower classes to determine where they can learn the most. The lack of grades and definitive placement policy may seem a bit unusual to those familiar with more traditional programs, but in reality the flexibility that open-entry open-exit affords is not abused by students, who want to learn and are quite realistic about which class would be best for them.

In summary, it has been posited that in-depth portfolio analysis can provide a detailed assessment of what an individual student has accomplished, how a course was taught, and the extent to which the pilot project achieved its goals. Therefore portfolio assessment has been chosen by the teacher/researcher to evaluate course development via analysis of the evolving lesson plans which focus on one or more of the three aspects of literacy. Portfolio evaluation can aid in the development of a literacy profile of each student within the context of his own evaluation of his emergent literacy, his perception of his learning styles and educational needs, and his assessment of the pilot course. The decision to use portfolios in the evaluation of this research project reflects the growing conviction in 'the capacity of classroom teachers, as members of a professional community, to assess student achievement by means of less-than-fully standardized methods, and to connect these assessments to ongoing improvement of the instructional program' (Calfee and Masuda, in press).

6.6. Conclusion

In any open-entry open-exit adult education ESL course the syllabus must be conceived of less in terms of providing a rigid structure, and more as a framework of concepts to be recycled by the teacher. A content-based syllabus framework was developed which incorporated the three aspects of literacy from the perspectives of Americanization and empowerment and certain key grammar concepts.

The open-entry open-exit program precluded use of commonly used methods of quantitative summative assessment. Portfolios can provide the basis for qualitative formative evaluation of the progress that students have made in the acquisition of English literacy in the course of the pilot project as well as their final summative assessment.

Portfolios can also be used to assess the effectiveness of the course and the teacher-generated instructional materials. How the course can be implemented in practice will be discussed next, when key aspects of the experimental adult ESL literacy course will be described through an analysis of actual student work.

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- 1 See Appendix 7.2 for a comparative analysis of the enrollment questionnaires of Ismael and Ignacio.
 - 2 A mid-term class evaluation questionnaire would be similar to the end of term questionnaire given in Appendix 7.10.

Chapter 7: Research Project:

Experimental Adult ESL Literacy Course

7.1. Introduction

Given the dialectical relationship between theory and practice — in which theory is realized in practice or, conversely, practice is informed by theory — it is now necessary to examine the degree to which the description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) and educational mandates (Chapter 5) used in the design of an experimental adult ESL literacy course (Chapter 6) can be realized in the classroom.

The implementation of the curriculum framework will be dependent upon the development of an intake questionnaire to ascertain quickly L1/L2 literacy levels of new students, a format for writing lessons which can be completed by students with disparate levels of literacy, and course evaluation questionnaires which will not only enable students to evaluate their learning styles and the different class activities, but will also help the teacher/researcher reflect how the class is being taught. As the open-entry open-exit program precludes commonly used methods of quantitative assessment, portfolio analysis has been chosen as the basis for qualitative formative evaluation and summative assessment of individual student progress and the pilot project as a whole (Chapter 6).

Documentation of the research comes from a pilot adult intermediate ESL class held in a high school located in a Latino neighborhood in Santa Barbara, California. The class met Wednesday and Thursday from 7 - 9 PM under the auspices of Santa Barbara City College Continuing [Adult] Education. The field research extended from September 1991 through December 1993 (with the exception of the term from April to June 1993).

7.2. Research utilizing portfolio analysis in the open-entry open-exit setting

The uniqueness of each classroom setting implies that any proposal needs to be tested, verified, and adapted by each teacher in his own classroom (Stenhouse 1975: 143). The Santa Barbara Adult Education open-entry open-exit policy resulted in an ever-changing class of students who varied greatly in degree of previous formal education, L1/L2 literacy, and L2 communicative competence (Chapter 6.5). These factors limited the usefulness and/or applicability of any educational research based upon the regular attendance of a homogeneous group of students for one term or longer.

Research also requires an awareness of local conditions and the positive involvement of the students, for otherwise such research 'even if enlightened, benevolent, and well-meaning' can 'nevertheless to some degree be impositional' (Phillipson 1992:

260). Therefore portfolio analysis was chosen as the most appropriate and least obtrusive means of assessing the extent to which theory could be realized in practice in the pilot adult education intermediate open-entry open-exit ESL class (Chapter 6).

It was never possible to predict which students would be in class and for how long. Consequently rather than developing a more traditional syllabus, a framework of recycled concepts was designed so that individual lessons based on thematic units could be taught which were appropriate for those students in attendance on any given day. All written work was photocopied in order to develop as complete a profile of each student's work as possible.

The project posited that the teacher/researcher was an expert on her own situation and would be able to explain and offer different and relevant interpretations of various classroom phenomena (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992: 67). Her formative analysis of portfolios provided a record of a learner's emergent literacy capability. An assessment of this written work from a qualitative holistic perspective formed the basis for a summative evaluation of the project by assessing whether the general approach of the materials was effective in promoting the achievement of the stated objectives.

This essentially descriptive and qualitative formative evaluation of all written work would enable the teacher/researcher to monitor developments by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the teaching and learning. To utilize Widdowson's distinction between *use* and *usage* (Widdowson 1978), rather than assessing a student's ability to compose correct sentences, which would indicate his knowledge of the language system, emphasis was upon ascertaining the student's ability to use his knowledge of the language system in order to achieve some communicative purpose.

Portfolios provided the documentation of the research project. All written work was photocopied and organized into portfolios for each of the 117 enrolled students. Each portfolio was assessed by the teacher/researcher on a regular basis throughout the research project. However, rather than trying to summarize the major factors visible in all 117, it was decided that a close in-depth analysis and comparison of select portfolios would provide a better analysis of the project. The two criteria for choosing portfolios for closer analysis were regularity of attendance and literacy level. On the basis of attendance, only fourteen students had attended regularly for more than two or more of the same terms. Of these fourteen, five had developed substantial portfolios.

Making an initial analysis on the basis of literacy, one student, Ignacio, was at the high end of the L1/L2 literacy spectrum but displayed more limited L2 oral communicative competence. The other four students exhibited the more common combination of high L2 oral communicative competence, but limited L1/L2 literacy. Further portfolio analysis revealed only one of the group of four, a student named Ismael, had been present for most of the same days as Ignacio. The portfolios of Ismael and Ignacio, representatives of the two ends of the orality-literacy spectrum, were therefore chosen for in-depth analysis to critique the project.

A carefully constructed materials evaluation can be used to analyze the degree to which objectives have been achieved (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992: 151). In this research project all of the student portfolios were assessed to determine whether the teacher-generated materials incorporated the three aspects of literacy and do evaluate whether they could be completed by students with diverse amounts of L2 oral communicative competence and literacy.

In summary, Ismael and Ignacio will be profiled throughout this chapter as exemplars of the two major literacy configurations in the class to show how literacy lessons appropriate for students with different backgrounds, abilities, and needs can be designed. The comparative influence of L1 literacy versus L2 oral communicative competence will also be discussed. An analysis of the literacy profiles presented by two portfolios will indicate the pedagogical usefulness of teacher-research conducted under the constraints of an open-entry open-exit settings. Portfolio analysis has additional value in that it can be done in any setting by any teacher/researcher, who is interested in the relationship between theory and practice in her own classroom.

The first problem facing the teacher/researcher in an open-entry setting was how to make a quick evaluation of a student's strengths and weaknesses in a non-threatening way as new students entered the class throughout the year.

7.3. Initial L1/L2 literacy evaluation of participants

An initial profile of each student's L1/L2 literacy was needed if lessons were to be designed for the actual target population. The site tester placed students at the intermediate level on the basis of a short eight-question L2 written test (Appendix 7.1) and his subjective evaluation of a student's L2 oral communicative competence. Each student was required to complete the district's computerized enrollment form, but it only asked for factual information such as the student's name, Social Security number, address, phone number, and date of birth.

Oral interviews have been used for class placement and by researchers seeking data on states and processes of language acquisition (Johnston 1985), oral proficiency (Ingram 1984), and class placement in ESL programs serving immigrants (Cummins and Jones 1994). While the Santa Barbara Adult Education program did not have sufficient personnel to do individual interviews, the class placement was usually quite accurate in terms of oral communicative competence. The unknown factor was always the student's literacy. Therefore, it was posited that a needs analysis intake questionnaire could serve as a type of literacy pre-test — the initial piece of writing for each student's portfolio.

Since no appropriate models for such a intake questionnaire were found, one had to be designed. The first was only in English, the assumption being that the teacher/researcher should assess what she was trying to teach, namely English. However, the students' limited L2 literacy greatly impeded their written communication. The form also provided no

information on L1 literacy proficiencies, which might be transferable to L2. Consequently a bilingual form was developed. In the English portion graphological literacy was assessed by penmanship, spelling, sentence usage, and punctuation. Functional literacy was evaluated through a format requiring students to provide information by filling in blanks or writing short responses to written questions in English. Questions requiring more than a one-word answer gave clues as to the student's command of English grammar and syntax. The literacy of thoughtfulness was incorporated by the inclusion of open-ended questions.

On the Spanish section of the form, the students were asked five questions about their vocational experiences in their native country as well as in the United States. Prompt questions were formulated to elicit the use of different verb tenses as an indicator of L1 literacy, particularly as the correct spelling and usage of Spanish verbs is difficult to master. The students were asked to write a paragraph in response that could be used to assess L1 literacy, as well as to determine which skills might be transferable to L2. The L1 component also enabled students to express their thoughts unhampered by their limited L2 literacy.

As program funding was dependent upon average daily attendance [ADA] as well as an extra amount based upon the number of students who had obtained amnesty (Chapter 5), information about the students' immigration status had to be tactfully ascertained. Therefore those students who had alien registration cards could enter their numbers; those who had none left the space blank.

The questionnaire was designed not only to assess literacy but also to elicit information about the students as individuals. Since content was as important as form, students were encouraged to get help from each other or from the teacher if necessary. For this reason, responses were not always exclusively the work of the new student, as evidenced not only by assistance being given in class, but also by changes in handwriting on the questionnaire.

The intake questionnaire was redesigned several times in an effort to ascertain as much information about each student's L1/L2 literacy as possible. An analysis of all of the questionnaires revealed that the majority were between the ages of 18 and 33. The students came primarily from the states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Sinaloa, and Zacatecas in central Mexico. Most had been in the United States for three to ten years and lived with relatives or friends.

The majority of the students were placed in the intermediate class because they had developed fairly high L2 oral communicative competence, having lived in the United States for a number of years. They had little if any previous ESL instruction, as evidenced by very limited L2 literacy. Most had little formal education in their native country, as reflected by what was often an almost equally limited level of L1 literacy. The students had come to the United States (and then stayed on) for economic reasons. The majority had started work in entry-level positions, but none of them were still doing entry-level jobs, perhaps because those who were not economically successful decided not to remain in the United States.

Most of those students, who had lived in the United States longer, had acquired some vocational skills through on-the-job training. They held a variety of jobs, such as electronics assemblers, auto mechanics, or maintenance men, which required some L2 oral communicative competence but little L2 literacy. Their salaries were two to three times greater than those of the more recent arrivals, who usually made only the American minimum hourly wage of \$4.35.

Representative of this group was Ismael, a 31 year old male from a small farm near Badiraguato, Sinaloa, Mexico. When the project began he had been living in the United States for 12 years and had developed fairly high L2 oral communicative competence. However, he had only attended elementary school for three years in Mexico, had very limited L1 literacy, and could hardly read or write any English.

The class also contained a few Mexican students who had lived in the United States for less than one year and had tested into the class because of L2 literacy, which was always higher than their L2 oral communicative competence. Most of these students had completed high school and some university courses in Mexico resulting in high L1 literacy. They had often had some EFL instruction in Mexico leading to a certain amount of L2 literacy, but their oral communicative competence was always more limited. Most of the students in this small group with higher L1/L2 literacy were more recent arrivals who had come to improve their English rather than for economic reasons and they worked in the hotel/restaurant sector. They almost all listed reading as a hobby, whereas most of the limited L1 literacy students listed sports, going to the beach, and watching TV — but never reading.

There was a close correlation between the literacy level of the Spanish composition and years of schooling. The few who wrote in complete sentences with punctuation had completed at least some years of high school, and the most skilled in graphological literacy had attended university. This raises the question to be considered throughout this chapter as to whether previous formal education and L1 literacy might be a more accurate predictor of the learning curve for attaining L2 literacy than L2 oral communicative competence.

A student exemplifying this second more literate group was Ignacio, a 28 year old male from Ocotlán, a suburb of Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. He had completed three years of university in Mexico and was very literate in L1. He had also had three years of English instruction in high school resulting in limited L2 literacy. However, Ignacio had only lived in the United States for ten months and had much lower L2 oral communicative competence than Ismael.

These generalizations have been based not only upon an evaluation of a student's L1/L2 literacy, but also of an analysis of the student's literacy needs and uses, his motivation for learning English, and some data about him as a person. A detailed comparison of the enrollment questionnaires of Ismael and Ignacio supported the generalizations made above about the two main constellations of students (Appendix 7.2).

While this analysis so far has been of the cognitive domain — also the focus of most ESL research — the affective domain can be particularly important for limited literacy students. Unlike the university student, whose past indicates at least moderate success as a learner and provides him with some confidence in his ability to succeed academically, an adult education ESL student with limited formal education may question his ability to learn enough to become literate. From this perspective, each lesson would have to be designed to guarantee at least minimal success for all students, but particularly for those with limited literacy.

In summary, this needs analysis intake questionnaire facilitated the development of each incoming adult ESL student's literacy profile, including his L2 literacy needs and uses, quickly and in a non-threatening way. The level of L2 literacy indicated what a student needed to learn, while L1 literacy indicated transferable skills and gave some evidence as to how rapidly a student might acquire L2 literacy. The limited L1/L2 literacy of most of the students revealed by the questionnaires and reinforced by individual comments to the teacher indicated that the development of students' confidence in their ability to learn in an educational setting should also be factored into lesson design.

The questionnaires as a whole revealed a wide range in L1/L2 literacy. The majority of the students, of whom Ismael was representative, had limited L2 literacy but high L2 oral communicative competence in English. A very few, like Ignacio, displayed the opposite combination of higher L1 and consequently L2 literacy, but more limited ESL oral communicative competence. The disparity in L2 literacy between Ismael and Ignacio indicated that lessons would have to be carefully designed so that all students could successfully complete them. The challenge was to develop lessons that would be appropriate for students at both ends of the literacy spectrum.

7.4. The evolution of literacy lesson design

Literacy lessons were developed not only in accordance with the experimental course framework of recycled concepts (Chapter 6.4), but also with reference to the student profiles just described. The lessons were to include both spoken and written components in order to capitalize on the stronger L2 oral communicative competence of students with more limited L1/L2 literacy, while also meeting the needs of those few with more limited L2 oral communicative competence but higher L1/L2 literacy. The aim was to enable students not only to use written English for the successful negotiation of meaning, but also to help them gain confidence in their ability to do so. The theoretical framework of literacy (Chapters 2-4) was used as the basis for the actual literacy lessons, thus uniting theory and practice. The intake questionnaire had provided information about the students' needs in graphological and functional literacy, as well as the literacy of thoughtfulness.

It might have been easier to incorporate some Spanish, particularly Spanish texts which would elicit the literacy of thoughtfulness, but this was not done for a number of

reasons. Although the district had no official *English only* policy, I wanted the students to speak (and hopefully think) in English in class. It was sometimes more difficult for them to express themselves in English, but I wanted them to realize that they could do so. I also usually had one or two non-Spanish speaking Europeans in the class. Finally, my Spanish is too basic for the more complex discussions that the literacy of thoughtfulness entails. Therefore, Spanish was only used in the diagnostic enrollment questionnaire; after that English was the medium of instruction.

The intake questionnaires, evaluated from the vantage of graphological literacy, revealed that many students needed to learn how to print manuscript letters according to the American norm and to capitalize words when necessary. While most students had a very limited command of English spelling and probably read very little in English, they did have an L1 skill which could be transferred — a mastery of the strong phoneme-grapheme relationship in Spanish. Therefore phonics was incorporated into the lessons with occasional mini-lessons specifically on spelling (Chapter 2.3). The concept of the sentence needed emphasis because even in Spanish most of the limited literacy students wrote, as they might have spoken, in a series of phrases rather than in complete sentences. Punctuation, including indentation for paragraphs, needed to be taught for this was not present in most of the Spanish compositions. Thus, the graphological goals included penmanship, spelling, and writing complete sentences with correct punctuation for paragraphs.

Functional literacy did not focus upon work place literacy, for students had very different jobs, most of which required little L2 literacy. Furthermore, although literacy might lead to slightly improved employment with the present employer, most of the students aspired to better jobs in other areas. Therefore the initial effort was to develop basic literacy. Students needed to learn how to glean information from any text and use it as necessary in writing — an ability required in most situations involving functional literacy. Later lessons focused upon specific topics — employment, pay checks, taxes, and phone bills.

The literacy of thoughtfulness was incorporated by designing texts which contained information that the students would have to evaluate in order to complete the written portion of the lesson. An ideal assignment would require a certain amount of critical thinking, but also be open-ended enough to encourage creativity and incorporate an ethical component.

A basic premise in lesson genesis was that writing never occurs in isolation. In that sense the reader, the writer, the content, and the form cannot be seen as discrete entities:

. . . writers are readers as they read their own texts. Readers are writers as they make responses on a written text. Content and subject matter do not exist without language. The form of a text is determined by the interaction of writer, reader, and context. Language inevitably reflects subject matter, the writer, and the writer's view of the reader's background and knowledge and expectations. (Raimes 1991: 421).

The complex interrelationship between the adult reader and/or writer and the text has been the basis of much research in ESL/EFL writing instruction during the last twenty-five years, but most of this research has been done with students in post-secondary academic settings (Raimes 1991). Innovative ESL writing approaches successfully used with university students would need considerable modification before they could be used with adult education students, as there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of L1/L2 literacy levels, educational preparation, academic capabilities, and regularity of attendance.

The literacy level of the intermediate adult education ESL students was more similar to that of young L1 learners than to that of university students their own age. Both adult education ESL students and NS children face similar problems as emerging readers and writers. It was hypothesized that the experience-based approach used to teach young Maori children might be appropriate (Ashton-Warner 1963). This focus upon student-generated text, rather than correct form, was also the basis of *the whole language approach*, which gained prominence in the United States in the 1980s through the work of Kenneth Goodman (1986). The whole language approach maintains that language is a whole and that any attempt to fragment it into parts in terms of grammar, vocabulary, or phonics destroys it. Furthermore, reading and writing about subjects of interest to the students leads to more effective literacy acquisition than the use of basal readers in English (Goodman et al. 1989) or in ESL (Rigg 1991, Johnson and Roen 1989).

Related to the whole language approach has been growing support for English instruction using a content-based curriculum in elementary and secondary schools, as well as in institutions of higher learning. In all three settings language has been seen as a means of conveying subject matter. In adult education, mandates to teach US history and civics as well as Americanization posit a content-based curriculum. The whole language approach and the use of a content-based curriculum have been successfully used for young L1 learners, who have age-appropriate mastery of L1 vocabulary, grammar and syntax and who confront no L1/L2 differences in grapheme-phoneme relationships. However, the content-based or whole language approaches would require some modification to meet the specific needs of limited literacy adult education ESL students.

The difficulty with the prevalent US emphasis upon the mechanics of the language, as evidenced by the popularity of the American ESL texts such as the Practical English 2 series (Harris 1988), is that simply completing workbook pages or teacher-generated worksheets cannot be equated with literacy. The model sentence once understood almost guarantees the successful completion of the assignment, but students often cannot transfer what they have learned in such a structured exercise on a limited grammar point to writing even a short essay.

Furthermore, most of the target adult education ESL students would not transfer into the community college ESL program or eventually to a university, so they had little need to develop academic writing skills. What they did need to develop was the confidence

and ability to deal with literacy tasks in the daily round, such as reading information from their child's school and writing a note in response or taking appropriate action when getting a note from a boss at work. As there was no way of targeting all of the literacy events that a student might encounter now and in the next few years, the goal was to develop lessons that were so carefully structured that everyone could successfully complete them and thus come to understand that they could complete these and other basic literacy tasks.

Lessons had to be developed which would help the students learn how to write not just single disparate sentences, but short essays following a given model. Pilot lessons were designed to enable students to write text — whole sentences in a paragraph. Previous personal experience with the whole language approach and a content-based curriculum had shown that if carefully constructed, prewriting brainstorming activities generated ideas and motivation, most NS children by the age of eight had developed sufficient literacy to write a paragraph about a given topic. However, the initial adult education ESL pilot lessons based upon this model were not effective. While there were areas of overlap between the two groups of learners, there were also significant and crucial differences.

The adult ESL students were more mature than L1 school pupils but they had much more limited graphological literacy in L2 (and sometimes in L1). Their English spelling was so poor that they felt they could not write down their thoughts. They had a limited command of English vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. The majority of the adult ESL students had gone to quite traditional rural Mexican schools where they had little experience with expository writing. Finally, if lessons were not constructed to insure success for all students, those students who wrote little and/or poorly suffered decreased rather than increased self-confidence in their ability to become literate in L2. This would have a negative effect on those students who were the most apprehensive about attending class in the first place and might cause them to give up because of feelings of inadequacy.

A search for alternative approaches led to a perusal of ESL textbooks. Write from the Start (Davidson and Blot 1984) provided a possible model. Each lesson began with a series of questions. Hypothetical answers to these questions were to be used as the basis of a model essay. The student was then asked to write a paragraph himself in response to the initial questions. The lesson design would need some modification, as Davidson and Blot had written for a more educated immigrants, most of whom were full-time students with a much higher learning curve than the adult education ESL students. However, the basic structure was sound, for students were asked not only to read a text but were given a means to write in response to it reflecting Scholes' idea that reading and writing are 'complementary acts' (1985: 20).

In the lessons modeled on Write from the Start prewriting activities not only provided the needed written vocabulary (which students often had in their spoken repertoire), but also modeled a sufficient amount of grammar and syntax to enable writing in complete sentences. After the necessary vocabulary had been presented in the first part of the assignment, a list of questions provided the framework for an essay of at least one

paragraph in length. A sample composition, in which key questions were answered with reference to an actual family, provided a realistic model essay about a person of interest — the teacher/researcher.

Height _____
Weight _____

Name Ismael
Date September 1993

Write a description of yourself. Indent your paragraph. Be sure you use complete sentences. Each sentence must begin with a capital or big letter and end with a period. Be sure you answer these questions in your paragraph.

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you come from?
3. How old are you?
4. How tall are you? (5'7" = five feet seven inches tall)
5. How much do you weigh?
6. What color is your hair? Is it long, short, curly, or straight?
7. What color are your eyes?
8. What are you wearing? Your worksheet will help you spell clothing words.

Colors: (light or dark)
Red + pink, maroon, magenta
Orange
Brown + tan
Yellow
Green + olive
Turquoise + aqua
Blue + navy blue
Black + grey
White

My name is Monica. I come from Colorado. I am 50 years old. I am 5'7". I weigh 150 pounds. I have long brown hair and I wear it in a braid. I have dark brown eyes. I wear glasses. I am wearing a red blouse and blue pants. I am wearing sandals. I usually wear a gold watch.

My name is Ismael. I come from Mexico.
I am 33 years old.
I weigh one hundred and sixty pounds.
I am 5'7" tall. I have brown eyes.
I have curly hair. Long hair.
I am wearing gray pants, black shoes,
and black socks.

While the writing sample itself will be analyzed in Chapter 7.5.1, this model shows the basic design of the lessons. Since most students had higher levels of L2 oral communicative competence than literacy and were often not familiar with the target vocabulary in written form, the prewriting activity and the sample essay were always done in choral reading — a phrase at a time — after the teacher. Those who couldn't read repeated what the teacher had read while following the text. The more literate students could still be challenged to attain better pronunciation and intonation, while also becoming more aware of English spelling. After the class had chorally read the whole lesson and asked any questions, students were paired to ask one another the questions. Then they wrote about themselves.

Initial assignments were designed for success. If a student answered the questions sequentially and simply plugged information about himself into the sample composition, he could usually write at least one short, cohesive and coherent paragraph, ideally consisting of short complete sentences rather than a run-on collection of phrases. Such an activity involved graphological and functional literacy, as well as opportunities for the literacy of thoughtfulness. The carefully controlled format provided adequate assistance for very limited literacy students, while the open-ended nature of the assignments not only enabled, but encouraged self-expression.

The dialectic between theory and practice involved in such an approach implied flexibility, innovation, and change. The premise was that lessons would evolve as the evaluation of one lesson led to the construction of the next as will be shown in the next section. If a lesson was unsuccessful, an effort was made to determine why. New lessons were designed to try to alleviate the limitations of previous ones. While the initial cycle of lessons focused on the student and his family, later in the course lessons were designed around the topic of literacy. Subsequent lessons for the mandated content-based units on civics and history were developed following this general plan.

The open-entry open-exit setting provided constraints on lesson design. First of all, lessons had to be developed which could be completed in one day. Second, any lesson would have to contain the necessary information within it for successful completion because it could not be assumed that all students would have done the previous lesson. The lessons were in some sense free-standing but they were usually part of a unit on a given topic.

Some lessons focused on a discrete grammar point for as contrastive analysis has shown, L1/L2 differences in syntax, lexicon, morphology, and phonology often lead to difficulties. For example, a lesson was designed in which students described the members of their family, for this emphasized the differences between *I am a teacher* and *Soy maestra* — the necessity of adding both the pronoun and article in the English sentence. Other lessons were designed to review a specific part of speech, such as prepositions. These might begin with a workbook page but every effort was made to conclude the lesson with a writing assignment that would encourage thoughtfulness, as evidenced by a take-off on

Gabriel García Márquez which was prompted by a somewhat fanciful worksheet illustration (Appendix 7.3).

In conclusion, little applicable research was found pertaining to limited literacy adult education ESL students. However, a perusal of adult ESL textbooks and a consideration of classroom approaches used with students having similar literacy needs led to the development of an experimental approach, designed to incorporate the dialectical relationship between theory and practice. The approach of Davidson and Blot (1984) provided the model for an evolving set of lessons, which enabled limited literacy ESL students to write with some success, but which also challenged the more able class members. While the open-entry open-exit factor meant that successful completion of a lesson could not be dependent upon previous attendance, there was some progression in the difficulty within a unit's lessons. This will now be illustrated through a discussion of student essays.

7.5. Portfolio analysis of literacy lessons

Literacy lessons following the above model (Chapter 7.4) were developed around thematic units. Two will be discussed here — one on self and family (including literacy needs and uses) and another on law and society. The topic of self and family was chosen because most people write more readily on topics about which they have personal experience and/or interest, rather than on topics which they do not find motivating and/or about which they lack schematic knowledge. In the first unit students wrote about themselves and their family, gradually increasing their vocabulary and writing skills. The second unit on law and society was part of the mandated history/civics curriculum. Here the goal was to get beyond just teaching names and dates to a focus upon the role of a citizen as a member of a participatory democracy.

Throughout the research project, lessons were introduced through a group or class prewriting activity, which contained the necessary vocabulary and grammatical structures to do the assignment. Most assignments with an essay component included a sample composition. While students could complete the majority of the writing assignments at a minimal level by following the model and inserting pertinent information, variations in lesson format and/or increasing levels of difficulty were utilized.

All compositions were written in class and the emphasis was upon writing well using assistance from fellow students and the teacher as needed. Students wrote in pencil, so that immediate corrections could be made. Samples of student work may consequently have fewer errors than might be evident if the students worked with no assistance.

There is growing interest in having students become more active in evaluating and improving their own writing (Raimes 1983). Portfolios used in more academic settings have been devised to document student progress by requiring students to include multiple drafts, often taking into account errors cued by the teacher on an initial draft, and

sometimes students are even asked to include letters assessing their work and explaining why certain selections were included (Chiseri-Strater 1992, Camp 1993, Rich 1994). While rewriting has obvious pedagogic value, the research setting precluded its use for a number of reasons. In the open-entry open-exit setting the fluctuating enrollment required that lessons be completed in one day. Irregular attendance made revision on a subsequent day difficult, thus precluding the writing of multiple drafts in class. The no-homework policy precluded asking students to rewrite an essay at home, which would have been too difficult a task for many of the students anyway for they needed assistance in spelling, help with grammar, and encouragement. Therefore it was decided that a writing lesson had to be designed so that it could be completed in one day and that students would be given as much aid as possible during class such as helping them spell words correctly or explaining why one preposition had to be used rather than another. The majority of adult education ESL students (like their limited literacy counterparts in primary school) also lacked sufficient literacy to make cueing errors very effective.

At the end of a class the teacher/researcher collected the essays and wrote in complete corrections. Often the teacher/researcher typed up corrected versions the class's compositions on a given topic of the compositions for the next class meeting. As everyone always wrote on the same topic, having students read all of the essays was a way of reinforcing the target vocabulary as well as showing how different students might approach the same topic. Seeing their own compositions *in print* boosted the self-esteem of these limited literacy students, who sometimes doubted their ability to learn to read and write. Throughout the rest of the chapter examples from the writing portfolios, primarily of Ismael and Ignacio, will be used to indicate how a single assignment could be designed to challenge students with diverse literacy needs.

7.5.1. Writing assignments about the student, his family, and literacy

Three lessons from a unit on the student and his family will be discussed, followed by two lessons on literacy needs and uses in order to show how increasingly complex lessons were designed, which not only provided writing experience for the students, but also helped the teacher/researcher gain a better understanding of her students. The first lesson focused upon a physical self-portrait. The second attempted to move away from the physical into character attributes and required the student to describe the ideal spouse. Since the idealized portraits indicated that the students had failed to consider critically what people are really like, the third assignment involved a self-portrait in which the student was to indicate both his strengths and weaknesses.

The first lesson, focusing on physical self-description, was constructed to insure success. The students had previously studied the needed vocabulary on a teacher-generated picture-dictionary type page, reinforced by Look Again Pictures (Olsen 1984), in which the differences between the two line drawings are often in the clothing of the people depicted. On the day of the lesson on self-description, each student was weighed and measured.

providing him with useful factual data he might not have. It could be argued that a factual description such as Ismael's (Chapter 7.4), which was created by following the model and working down the list of questions, involved more copying than expository writing. Nevertheless, such a controlled lesson provided an important first step for such limited literacy students who had never written any extended text in English. More able students, such as Ignacio, wrote more extensive descriptions.

A lesson at the next level of complexity involved writing a description of one's ideal (or actual) spouse or companion. The prewriting questionnaire on personal attributes incorporated the vocabulary and grammatical constructions necessary to complete the assignment (Appendix 7.5). The literacy of thoughtfulness was included as a student had to make choices in completing the questionnaire and then reevaluate his choices in order to compose his essay. As Ismael was absent on the day of the assignment, consider the composition of Norberto:

Norberto

my wife. will. love. me
my wife will- beautiful
my wife will rich
my wife speak english
my wife like children
my wife is intelligent
my wife likes job

From a graphological perspective, in the first line the student reverted to his earlier practice of putting a period between every word. He must have remembered that was wrong and stopped doing it, but then also omitted periods at the end of each sentence. Sentences are not begun with a capital, but since there is only one sentence per line, the composition is clear.

The sample sentences of the questionnaire had a functional purpose in that they provided possible text to be used *as is* or with modification. While Norberto's portrait of his future wife is somewhat idealized and consists mainly of sentences from the questionnaire, the student had chosen what he wanted to write and had included information beyond that provided. All students completed the assignment, but the very idealized portraits of future spouses indicated that the literacy of thoughtfulness had not been adequately addressed for it is unrealistic to assume that any mortal (including the person one will marry) is perfect.

Therefore, the third lesson was based upon a questionnaire in which students would have to analyze their character traits in terms of the spectrum created between opposites (Appendix 7.6), such as *friendliness* and *grouchiness*. Students were then required to write about not only their strengths but also their weaknesses. This is how Ismael described himself:

February 8, 1993

Ismael

I am cheerful. I like other people

I have sometime good humor

Sometimes I am serious

Sometimes I am intelligent.

Sometimes I don't think I am.

I do get angry very easily sometimes

I like to read in my free time

Most of the vocabulary used was embedded in the questionnaire and most sentences were formed by converting the form's questions to answers. However, a sentence such as *I do get angry very easily sometimes* reveals Ismael's command of English syntax and vocabulary. His spelling had improved although he did need help with *easily*.

While most of the students, like Ismael, wrote more factual, but realistic compositions, this assignment could provide the basis for thoughtful self-analysis, as evidenced in the essay by Ignacio, who portrayed himself in terms of his distinguishing traits:

ignacio

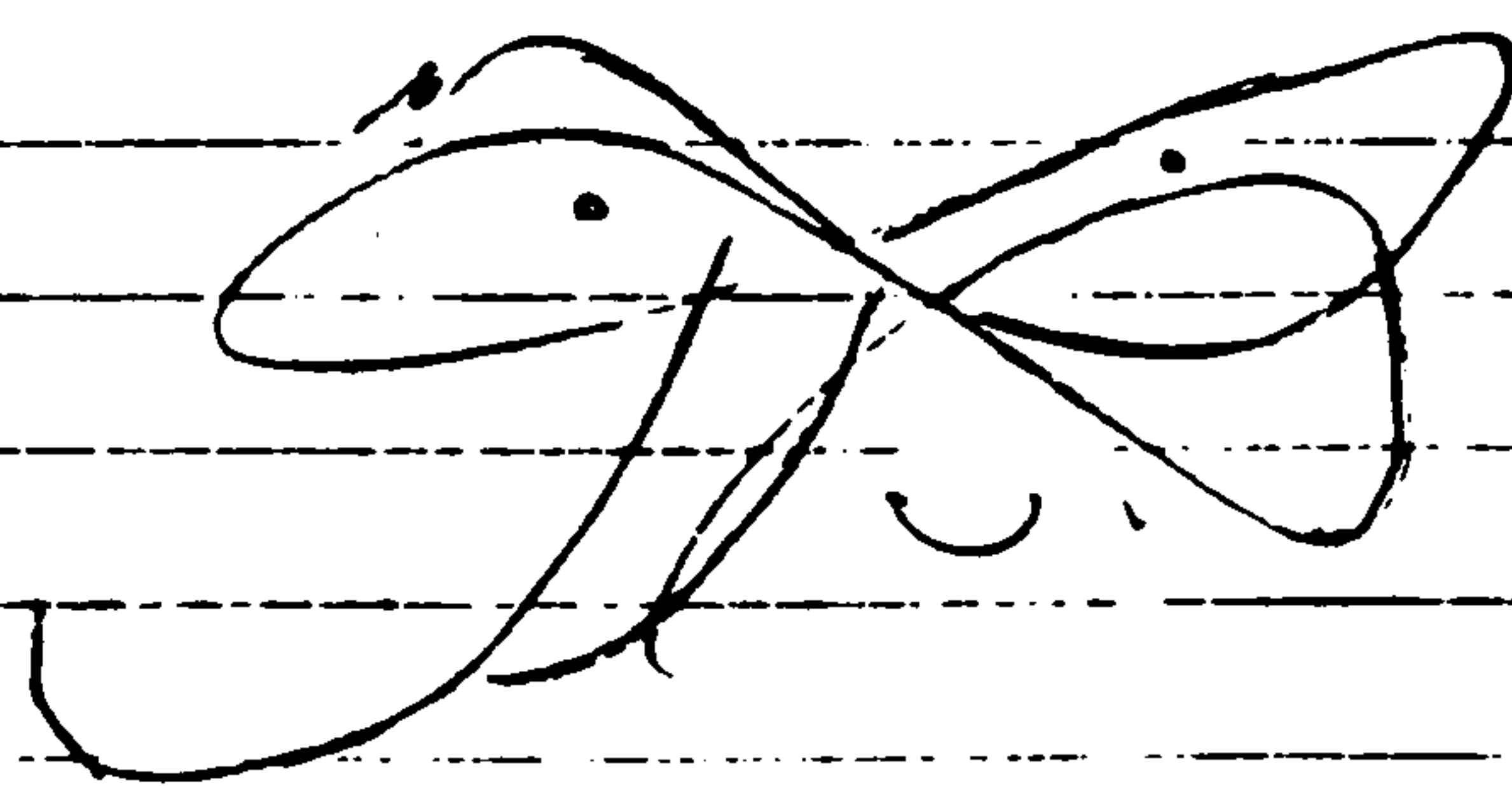
My self is honest, calm and has a good sense of humor.

Calm: I have a lot of calm for the personal things (problems, and life). I don't rush in expect my life doing wrong things. I think first and later do the best way to fix the problem.

Honesty: I love the honest in every person. I don't like the lies, but, if I say lies is for help the other people for keep safe one secret of the people I like the people who ask me direct questions and I can give back a direct answer.

Sense of humor : I don't know
if is a good or a bad thing about
me, because, if the people are
angry, they think, I'm making fun
of them. and no way, but,
If we are in a good sense
of humor, we'll have a great
time.

I'm not a susseful people, I'm
an ordinary one. but I can
give a good suport for the
people who love me.



Ignacio's essay contained far more errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax than those of Ismael and Norberto, but it was much longer and more creative. In the ungraded setting his expressiveness was not hampered by fear of making errors.

This initial series of three lessons has shown that writing assignments including the components of graphological and functional literacy as well as the literacy of thoughtfulness can be created with varying degrees of complexity and challenge, building upon past writing experiences, while eliminating errors in previous lesson design. The disparity between Ismael's and Ignacio's command of written English, as seen in their self-

portraits, had been anticipated by differences in the amount of formal education they reported on the enrollment questionnaires. However, it was decided to augment the literacy profiles by creating two more lessons which would provide insight into the students' childhood literacy background, as well as their present literacy needs and uses.

The lesson on reading and writing at home contained a prewriting questionnaire and a sample essay, both designed to help the students verbalize strategies that might have been used when they were growing up. Consider Ismael's literacy background:

Name ISMAEL
Date February 18-92

Reading and Writing at Home

Activity:

Ask your partner these questions. Then your partner will ask you the questions. Then write about your family on this page. Write a paragraph and indent the first line. The story is about my husband's parents.

1. How many books did you have at home?
2. Did anyone read them? how often—every day, once a week? never?
3. Did your father read the newspaper? how often?
4. Did your mother read the newspaper? how often?
5. Did they read magazines, comics, the TV guide?
6. Did they get bills in the mail? How did they pay? In cash? With a check?
7. What did they do when they couldn't read what they got in the mail?
8. What did they do when they couldn't write something?

Reading and Writing at Home

I was born in Wales. My parents had two books, the Bible and the Catholic missal. My mother took the missal to mass on Sunday. My mother only finished fifth grade. She can't read or write very well. My father finished high school and he could read and write much better. He liked to read the newspaper every day. Each week they bought the TV guide and they could read that. My father sometimes wrote checks. When they got utility bills in the mail, my mother walked to town and paid them. Since my father died, my mother sometimes has trouble reading and writing. If she needs help, she asks a neighbor. She also asks my brother to help her when he comes to visit. Now she has a telephone, so she can telephone him. She also calls me here in America. She like to call better than writing letters.

I was born in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico

My parents They did have a few books.

They couldn't Reading Those Books.

My mother she only went to school for three years

My father he NEVER went to school.

One might have anticipated very limited family literacy because of Ismael's own lack of formal education. His essay indicated that his parents were less literate than he was, if they could read or write at all. Within his immediate family Ismael had no literacy role models. Furthermore, there was probably nothing in the home to read that would have been of interest to a child and no one to read it to him.

Contrast this to Ignacio's childhood:

Name J. Iguaio
Date October 20 92

Reading and Writing at Home

Activity:

Ask your partner these questions. Then your partner will ask you the questions. Then write about your family on this page. Write a paragraph and indent the first line. The story is about my husband's parents.

1. How many books did you have at home?
2. Did anyone read them? how often—every day, once a week? never?
3. Did your father read the newspaper? how often?
4. Did your mother read the newspaper? how often?
5. Did they read magazines, comics, the TV guide?
6. Did they get bills in the mail? How did they pay? In cash? With a check?
7. What did they do when they couldn't read what they got in the mail?
8. What did they do when they couldn't write something?

Reading and Writing at Home

I was born in Wales. My parents had two books, the Bible and the Catholic missal. My mother took the missal to mass on Sunday. My mother only finished fifth grade. She can't read or write very well. My father finished high school and he could read and write much better. He liked to read the newspaper every day. Each week they bought the TV guide and they could read that. My father sometimes wrote checks. When they got utility bills in the mail, my mother walked to town and paid them. Since my father died, my mother sometimes has trouble reading and writing. If she needs help, she asks a neighbor. She also asks my brother to help her when he comes to visit. Now she has a telephone, so she can telephone him. She also calls me here in America. She likes to call better than writing letters.

I was born in Ocotlán, Jalisco, Mexico. My parents had a lot of books of every kind, I and my sister read a lot of them. (I read every day) My father read the news paper every day. my mom sometimes my mom bought to us comics in the early years for wake up in us the know of the read, I start reading when I have 4 years old. My parents also read magazines and the TV guide. the first book who I read was "the three musqueters" for "Alejandro Dumas" and the last one "the spider woman kiss" by "Manuel Puig". The bills was paid in cash in Mexico is more often this farm, they read everything in the mail also my letters (the personals) my mom help the other people to read their mail, my sister teach to read and write people who don't know read. My mom have a beautiful white I love the form who write she. I love write letters.

In a previous essay Ignacio had written that his father was a doctor. From this composition it becomes evident that not only were his parents educated literate individuals, but they also encouraged their children to read for enjoyment. In Ignacio's case they were successful. The fact that Ignacio's mother and sister helped others who were less literate reflects a practice more common in areas of the world where limited literacy prevails. Ignacio also mentioned penmanship, obviously not only understanding minimum standards, but also indicating his awareness of the importance of *a fine hand*. In contrast many limited literacy students, such as Ismael, had difficulty in understanding the visual impact of graphological literacy and the value of conforming to a penmanship norm.

In addition to this lesson on childhood literacy, another questionnaire was designed to gain insight into the students' own L1/L2 literacy needs and uses followed by an essay question to elicit information on literacy role models (Appendix 7.7). Many students like Ismael had not read or written anything outside of class during the last week, not even notes to themselves — perhaps an indication of the more extensive use of memory skills among less literate people. Although Ignacio, a hotel house boy, did not have to read or write anything at work, his questionnaire reveals that he read whatever notices were put up at work. He also read newspapers and novels at home. While the intent of the essay question was to get students to think about the relationship between literacy and intelligence in the broadest sense, Ignacio misunderstood the prompt and wrote about what he had learned from his parents, who were strong literacy role models.

In summary, this series of lessons on self, family, and literacy indicates how prewriting activities were designed embedding key vocabulary and syntax. Usually a series of questions provided the rubric for a composition, which was then modeled by a story about the teacher/researcher. While those teaching EFL might find that the prewriting texts sometimes contained considerable vocabulary or complex syntax, it should be remembered that the limited literacy adult education ESL students usually had fairly high L2 oral communicative competence and quite a broad vocabulary. If students did not know the meaning of a word, either other students or the teacher/researcher would try to define the word in English. If this was not successful, someone gave the Spanish translation. These lessons, which combined orality and literacy, enabled even limited literacy students to write short compositions successfully, while also challenging the stronger student.

The information provided by the students in their compositions also raises the question as to the influence of an individual's L1 literacy and his family literacy background upon his acquisition of L2 literacy. Although Ismael remained more adept at L2 oral communication than Ignacio, the latter made much more rapid progress in L2 literacy. Ignacio indicated the strong and positive effect his family had upon his development of L1 literacy and was able to transfer literacy skills from L1 to L2 in this series of assignments.

This unit focused primarily upon what Hairston perceived to be an important goal of any writing course: 'learning how to use language to express ideas effectively' (1991:

B1). Of benefit to the teacher/researcher were the more complete student profiles for she now had much more information on the students' literacy needs and uses. However, functional literacy implies that students read, understand, and write about material they encounter as members of their society. Could the approach developed so far could be used to teach students information they would need in order to become Americanized and/or empower them as members of a participatory democracy?

7.5.2. Writing assignments from a unit on law and society

History and civics were a mandated part of the adult ESL curriculum. Most of the Mexican students were apolitical. In Mexico the ruling party had remained in power for over sixty years due to corruption (including election fraud). Consequently most of the students, and particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, believed that government at the state and national level would not significantly change regardless of what the populace said or how they voted.

If such ESL students were taught US history and civics simply as a series of facts (as is often the case), they would not achieve a greater understanding of the political process or increase their political awareness. The law and society unit was based on current events in order to get students interested in the political process and to give them some understanding of the citizen's role in a participatory democracy, including a historical perspective when appropriate. Such a unit might serve to Americanize to the degree that it taught the powers and responsibilities of an American citizen but it would, ideally, also empower students to the degree that they could use this information either when they became naturalized or when they returned to their native country. Consequently, the unit also incorporated comparative government and history.

During the research period, a number of significant incidents related to the theme of law and society occurred. The 1991 beating of the African-American, Rodney King, led to the trial of the white policemen involved. Their light sentencing precipitated the 1993 Los Angeles riots, during which a white truck driver, Reginald Denny, was badly beaten by African-Americans. A component in all these events was racial discrimination, which was put into a historical context through a discussion of individuals such as Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.

The aim of the thematically-based unit was to design literacy activities that could foster learning of content as well as form, thus moving beyond graphological literacy to functional literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness. As schematic knowledge about law and society was necessary to provide the ideational scaffolding needed to understand the issues, lessons were designed with a stronger oral component than in the previous unit. Reading selections were written by the teacher/researcher, as most students had insufficient literacy to read about current events in the local newspapers, and ESL textbooks tended simply to present factual information on US history and government.

Five different types of lessons were developed for the law and society unit, which could be considered prototypical in so far as they were illustrative of the kinds of lessons that could be used in other content-based units. The first was a questionnaire that enabled students to keep track of their reasoning during a discussion of a complex issue. The second contained a series of questions to be answered in complete sentences following a class discussion. The third was an essay assignment similar to those in the previous unit but without a sample composition. In the fourth, students were able to generate questions which they would have liked to ask historical figures from their native countries. In the fifth, students learned the functional literacy skill of writing business letters. While the students' work will be used primarily to illustrate their ability to convey content, the samples are presented chronologically to indicate emergent literacy.

All of the lessons began with an extensive discussion of what was usually a complex issue. During this prewriting activity key words and phrases were written on the overhead projector to assist in comprehension and to provide familiarity with the written form of the target vocabulary. Next the class chorally *read* the teacher-generated text and discussed any unclear passages. The writing component of the lesson was designed to encourage students to express themselves thoughtfully and critically, for the literacy of thoughtfulness can be an important component of instruction even for limited literacy students.

The first lesson type was a questionnaire which students filled out during a discussion of whom to vote for in an election, because voting is one of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in what is ideally 'government by, of, and for the people'. A pilot lesson on voting, in which students had worked in groups to analyze campaign literature and political advertisements of a particular candidate, was unsuccessful because the mayoral group chose the only Latino on the basis of race although his qualifications were so limited that not even the local Latino political action group had endorsed him.¹

Students' limited literacy and lack of political sophistication suggested that in future lessons on voting a teacher-led discussion would insure that students understood the basic issues. For the 1992 US Presidential race a questionnaire was designed in which each candidate's stance on the major issues was presented in outline form (Appendix 7.8). The whole class discussed issues one at a time, thus utilizing the students' higher oral skills. Literacy was incorporated as students read the questionnaire and then voted on which candidate they favored for each separate issue. Before the final secret ballot, students were encouraged to evaluate the complete platform of candidates, rather than to base their decision on a single issue. This lesson, which combined orality and literacy, enabled students not only to understand the major campaign issues but also to indicate how they might evaluate candidates in the future — either here or in their native country.

The second type of lesson was designed to encourage students to express themselves in writing after a class discussion on a given topic. The following series of

questions focus on discrimination in the public arena as well as in a student's own life. Here are Ismael's responses:

Name Ismael
Date October 19-1993

Directions: Discuss the questions with a partner or in a group. Then write down your own answers.

1. Did anyone ever discriminate against you? yes peter wilson
2. Who did? He discriminates old latinos and
3. Why do you think they did it? mexican he want to quik it out - old the mexican to mexico -
4. What would your mother say if you married an American? a Black person? an Asian? The reason he wants to do is becuz
5. What would your father say if you married an American? A Black person? An Asian? He wants to be elected for governments
6. What would you think if your best male friend told you he was a homosexual? for califonia
7. What would you think if your best female friend told you she was a lesbian? again,
8. Do people discriminate in your country? yes they do
9. Who do they discriminate against? They do discriminate to other
10. Why do you think they do it? people becuse they think
11. Do you think men discriminate against women? They are better other people
12. When do they do it? When I was children
13. Why do they do it? when I was go to school
14. What can you do about discrimination? They other student they discriminate
15. What can you teach your children about discrimination? against to me
They had more money
that me

While the intent of the opening question was to get the students personally involved, Ismael answered the first three questions from a much broader perspective accusing Pete Wilson (the incumbent in the California gubernatorial race who had recently come out strongly against illegal immigration as well as any educational or medical services for undocumented aliens) of discrimination. Ismael responded to the questions about discrimination in his native country (#8-10) from a personal perspective, indicating that discrimination as well as poverty had curtailed his education — thus providing a more complete literacy profile.

The third type of lesson involved writing a short composition without a sample composition. During the Denny trial, the class considered how such a case was handled in the American legal system and discussed the related issue of discrimination, in the course of which key words were written on the overhead projector. Ismael then wrote the following essay:

Ismael

OCTOBER 25-1993

To obtain justice we have to
know the truth.
I'm going to write about the case
about reginald Denny's beating case.
He was almost dead. These black
people they were beating him.
They did it because they were
angry. I think Denny reginald he
didn't have nothing to do with riot
because he was driving a truck. He
was doing his job,
but everybody have different opinion
I think would be not discriminations
would nothing happened

While Ismael shows increasing, although still limited, facility with the mechanics of writing, he could articulate his thoughts in writing, indicating that the object of the American legal system is to find the truth. Ismael felt that the white truck driver, Reginald Denny, had done nothing to precipitate the violence. He had been dragged from his truck and beaten by African-Americans during the Los Angeles riots not because of discrimination against him personally, but rather because of the frustration that those individuals felt towards whites.

In the fourth type of lesson, the students were asked to move from the description and analysis of a given situation to see how they could utilize ideas, originally considered in the American context, with reference to their own country. Throughout the law and society unit students had read short teacher-generated biographical sketches about pertinent historical figures. Now they were asked to write about significant historical figures from their own country:

Name Ismael
Date 16 February 1993

Famous People

Every country has famous citizens. We have talked about American presidents like Lincoln and Washington. We have talked about Afro-American people involved in civil rights like Rosa Parks, who sat down on the bus because she was tired and wouldn't get up when a white man wanted her seat. She was sent to jail. This led to the bus boycott in Montgomery Alabama and integration of public transportation. We read about Reverend Martin Luther King, Junior, who read a lot about Mahatma Gandhi. King believed people should be non-violent when they worked to end segregation. We read about Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who knew the US Constitution said "All men [and women] are created equal". Marshall thought "separate but equal" was wrong and he thought that laws had to protect the rights of people.

Who are three famous people in your country and what did they do?

1. Benito Juarez: He was one of the best president
2. Miguel Idalgo: he made the F Freedom in 1910
3. Niños Héroes: They fought for the Revolution

If you could go back in time and meet one of these people, who would you want to meet? Why? If you could ask him or her one question, what would you ask? Why?

Ismael could complete the assignment at one level, but compare his paper with that of Ignacio:

Name Jonais
Date February 16, 93

Famous People

Every country has famous citizens. We have talked about American presidents like Lincoln and Washington. We have talked about Afro-American people involved in civil rights like Rosa Parks, who sat down on the bus because she was tired and wouldn't get up when a white man wanted her seat. She was sent to jail. This led to the bus boycott in Montgomery Alabama and integration of public transportation. We read about Reverend Martin Luther King, Junior, who read a lot about Mahatma Gandhi. King believed people should be non-violent when they worked to end segregation. We read about Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who knew the US Constitution said "All men [and women] are created equal". Marshall thought "separate but equal" was wrong and he thought that laws had to protect the rights of people.

Who are three famous people in your country and what did they do?

- 1 - Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. she was a writer and talk about the rights of the woman was the first feminist.
- 2 - Rufino Tamayo: he was a painter and a defensor of the environment
- 3 Octavio Paz. he was a writer he won the Nobel of literature in 1991.

If you could go back in time and meet one of these people, who would you want to meet? Why? If you could ask him or her one question, what would you ask? Why?

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz: why do you, take the habit and forget the world outside?
why you don't try to find the way of your ideas out side of the church?
If you can go out of Mexico what country you would like to know or study on it?
do you really like the habit or it is only the way in this time to know or study good things?
your ideas changed inside of the church or do you have this ideas before?
the church try to stop the way of you think what career you choose if you can go to the university?
If you will married what men you choose?
what kind of life would you like if the church don't exist.

While the role of women in the family and the society, the role of the church, and educational and employment opportunities in both Mexico and the United States had been discussed in class, Ignacio's responses show how a lesson can be designed that all can complete, but which is provocative for the more literate and educated students.

The fifth type of literacy lesson was to show how focus could be placed upon a specific functional literacy task — writing business letters. The pilot letter writing lesson, which included an extensive prewriting discussion and a modeling of the correct form, was not successful (Chapter 1.5). Consequently a checklist was devised to insure correct formatting. However, rather than constructing a hypothetical exercise in functional literacy, actual letters of thanks were written after field trips. Students wrote to those who had provided complementary tickets for the musical *Oklahoma*, which deals with the conflict between the farmers and cowboys in the Old West. The class also wrote letters after a field trip to the county court house where, after an introductory discussion, the class held a mock trial in an actual courtroom. In the trial, diverse literacy levels were accommodated by having the more literate students read character parts, while the less literate acted as jurors, were sequestered, and pronounced a verdict. While the letter-writing lesson emphasized the form of the business letter, the task also encouraged students to write about what they had learned (Appendix 7.9).

In summary, these five lessons from the law and society unit have shown how the model developed in the unit on self and family could be modified for use with a more content-based curriculum, designed to enable students to function more thoughtfully in a literate democratic society. Samples from the portfolios of Ismael and Ignacio indicated developing competence in spelling, the principles of which had been incorporated into many prewriting activities. Their command of grammar and syntax also increased.

One could ask whether these students would have made greater progress if there had been more focus upon form and less on content, but a more notional/functional approach would not have fulfilled the state mandate of Americanization nor led to a thoughtful consideration of socio-political issues. Adult education ESL has been mandated to have a content-based curriculum because this program offers the only formal educational experience most of these students will have.

Finally, the lessons provided adequate structure so that even students with limited educational experience and L2 literacy developed sufficient competence and belief in their ability to read chorally through teacher-generated materials and then write a brief paragraph, getting help with spelling as needed. While the portfolios give indication of the student's emergent literacy, what cannot be documented in this way is a student's increasing confidence in his literacy skills. If an atmosphere of trust is developed in a classroom between the teacher and the students, an individual realizes that it is all right to make errors, that what is important is to try, and that everyone can help each other to learn to read and write English better (Clare 1995). The above portfolio analysis indicates that the students' writing improved using this approach. What is more difficult to document, but what

obviously played a part in students' continued attendance and effort was their growing confidence in their emergent literacy.

7.6. Portfolio analysis of student course evaluations

Traditionally evaluation has been thought of in terms of a teacher's judgment of a student. However, if a student takes an active part in the learning process, then his ongoing reflection upon what he has learned, how he has done so, and what he needs to learn in the future is also of importance. It has been argued that a portfolio is not a portfolio unless it includes self-assessment and reflection on the part of the student (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer 1991). That is to say that a portfolio is not just another method of assessment of the student done by the teacher or an external examiner. Rather a portfolio offers the opportunity for the student and teacher to monitor progress jointly and to take responsibility for meeting goals. As students come to see learning as a progress, they gain a developmental perspective on their learning (Wolf 1989) and they become more responsible for their learning (Tierney, Carter, and Desai 1991).

An important part of this evaluation procedure is not just reviewing what is in the portfolio, but assessing what has been taught. Although it was not possible to have individual portfolio conferences, formatting for portfolio conference questionnaires was examined (Clemmons et al 1993, Glazer and Brown 1993, Yancy 1992). This helped in the development of a questionnaire which the students could use to evaluate their own written work and the pilot project. While an ultimate goal may be 'learners who have reached a point where they are able to define their own goal and create their own learning' (Nunan 1995: 147), the degree of self-direction and autonomy students achieve is influenced by their cultural backgrounds and academic sophistication. For the target group, any sort of student evaluation would be a new experience. A course evaluation form would have to be designed that could successfully be completed by everyone. The students' limited literacy ruled out any questionnaire with many open-ended questions that would require a lot of writing (e.g. Breen and Candlin 1987: 12).

The major portion of the questionnaire would have to be formatted so that the class could chorally read each question and then each student would have time to respond by checking the degree to which he liked, could accomplish, or learned from an activity. A few open-ended questions at the end would not only give the students an opportunity to express themselves, but would also provide final documentation of their literacy.

A class evaluation questionnaire was designed by the teacher/researcher to help each student to assess whether he learned better through orality or literacy, whether he learned better alone or with others, and to indicate which class activities he liked best (Appendix 7.10). Each student also evaluated his comprehension of spoken and written English. The student was finally asked to write down what he wanted to learn in the next term, what he had liked best about the class, and what he thought he would remember about the class in

five years. While any such self-evaluation is by its very nature subjective, the responses helped not only to augment the student literacy profiles, but also to evaluate the extent to which the experimental course had met the diverse literacy needs of those in the class — as exemplified in the following analysis of the questionnaires of Ignacio and Ismael.

From the literacy profile of Ignacio developed thus far in this chapter, he had a better command of L1/L2 literacy and spent more time reading and writing than did Ismael, but both students felt they learned best by listening and speaking. While Ignacio liked to learn by reading and writing, Ismael agreed about reading but felt he only learned a little from writing — an obvious reflection of how difficult writing was for him.

Ignacio, who had sufficient literacy to perform well on any written task, was receptive to all forms of assignments and learned well in any class configuration, favoring group work if everyone worked. In contrast Ismael favored working with the whole class, because in groups, pairs or alone, he felt handicapped by his limited literacy. This perception was reinforced through Ismael's evaluation of class activities for he only liked reading in the history book *a little* and he did not like worksheets which he found very difficult. He did like writing *stories* [compositions] and letters because sufficient modeling insured success. What Ismael liked best were the oral comparisons of the Look Again Pictures (Olsen 1984), which the class did together, and the verb tests, where rather than being taken aback by the fact that he missed more than most of the other students, he saw and was encouraged by the progress he was making.

The students' perception of their understanding of spoken English revealed unexpected information. Ignacio consistently assessed his understanding of spoken English higher than Ismael did, although as a teacher I would have anticipated the opposite. Ismael's claim that he understood nothing of what fellow workers and store employees said seems unrealistic and may reflect his somewhat low self-assessment.

The literacy evaluations seemed more realistic, for Ignacio was definitely more literate than Ismael. The teacher/researcher was aided by knowing which activities the students found the most difficult for these became the focus of future lessons.

There is increasing discussion about student involvement in curriculum development (Nunan 1988), but students with little formal education (such as Ismael) had difficulty in pinpointing what they would like to learn. For example, Ismael knew he wanted to learn more English but Ignacio wrote specifically that he didn't understand slang very well and wondered if more instruction should be given in this area. Neither student mentioned any specific literacy tasks which caused difficulty — information which was gleaned, however, from the questionnaire responses.

In response to the final question, Ismael again answered globally that learning English was what he would not forget. Ignacio was more sophisticated, not only commenting on his improved pronunciation, but indicating that English instruction in California was more responsive to the needs of the individuals and that he had enjoyed the way the pilot class had been taught. This suggests that although the majority of the students

needed very structured assignments because of their limited literacy, the literacy of thoughtfulness had been incorporated sufficiently to challenge even the most creative and literate students in the class.

In conclusion, a comparison of how Ignacio and Ismael learned and in which areas they needed further instruction showed that a class evaluation questionnaire can encourage students to think about how they learn best and which activities foster such learning. The student evaluation of classroom activities helped the teacher understand which lessons the student favored, while also providing a critique of the course. How much spoken and written language the students comprehended and in which settings provided responses different from what the teacher/researcher would have anticipated, but did indicate areas that could become the focus of future lessons.

The students' perception of the course and their own progress was undoubtedly to some extent influenced by interaction with the teacher throughout the course. Every effort was made to provide timely feedback on written work. Students received oral comments on their literacy lesson essays as they worked and the papers were returned with written comments at the next class meeting. Spelling tests were corrected during the break and returned on the same day. Additional verbal interaction between teacher and student during class enabled each student to understand where progress was being made and where further effort was necessary. Individualized formative and summative assessment as well as positive reinforcement were found to be more appropriate than judging students against some pre-established norm. This approach allowed the teacher to take into account individual differences in formal education as well as L1/L2 literacy levels. It is, of course, impossible to know the extent to which the student's perception of how they were doing on the basis of teacher interaction rather than grades influenced their perception of the course. However, the differences in the student course evaluation indicate that Ignacio and Ismael had a fairly accurate perception of how they were doing and their comments aided the teacher/researcher in her own evaluation of the course in general and their progress in particular.

7.7 Summative portfolio evaluation

Portfolios can be valuable in monitoring student progress, assessing student performance relative to curriculum objectives, maintaining a continuous record of student performance, and providing a basis for student self-evaluation. Throughout this chapter the written assignments of Ismael and Ignacio have been used to indicate how a teacher/researcher might make an initial needs analysis, assess how individual students with varying degrees of L2 orality and literacy completed assignments, determine if the lessons could be completed by all, and evaluate whether the lessons were challenging regardless of a student's L2 literacy level. Finally, opportunities were given for summative student course evaluation.

The major components of graphological literacy addressed were penmanship, spelling, and punctuation. While Ignacio had previously mastered printing and cursive, Ismael gained some competence in penmanship and became fairly consistent in printing upper and lower case letters according to the American norm. Both Ismael and Ignacio made progress in spelling. Not only did they improve on spelling tests, but they also learned how to sound out words utilizing their understanding of long and short vowel sounds. The gap between the two students in spelling increased rather than diminished, suggesting L1 spelling proficiency affected acquisition of the same skills in L2. Ismael learned to write in complete sentences with punctuation, acquiring a skill that Ignacio already had.

Functional literacy implies the ability to read and write text one encounters in the daily round. Ismael was virtually illiterate upon entrance, but by the end of the research project he could read simple texts and had developed minimal competence in writing. Ignacio, who had minimal competence in reading and wrote flawed but comprehensible text when he arrived in class, was challenged throughout the research project probably because of the incorporation of the literacy of thoughtfulness. Both students showed some progress in their command of grammar and syntax, although lessons often focused more upon mandated content than form. A stronger emphasis upon the structural and grammatical points of standard written English may have led to greater improvement in that regard, but students learned how to express themselves in writing through increasingly complex lessons.

The pilot lessons provided opportunities to develop, organize, and express information and ideas in lexically and syntactically appropriate English. The tasks could therefore be evaluated holistically in terms of overall competence, as are the TOEFL TWE [Test of Written English] (Educational Testing Service 1992: 23). As an experienced TOEFL TWE reader, I would say that Ismael originally demonstrated *incompetence* in writing using the TOEFL TWE criteria. After two years in the research project his work demonstrated *developing competence* in writing although his compositions remained flawed on the rhetorical and syntactic level and he continued to write much more slowly than a person with more formal education might. Using the TOEFL TWE scoring of 1 to 6 (Appendix 7.11), Ismael progressed from 1 to about 2.5. While it could be said that anyone should make progress if he attends an ESL class regularly, Ismael's progress from being a non-reader and non-writer to someone with *developing competence* in literacy, as well as his confidence in his ability to learn, was impressive.

Ignacio would have probably initially tested in at level 3 as someone with *developing competence*. Although he was only in the research project for the last the two terms with Ismael, Ignacio rose to level 4 demonstrating *minimal competence* while still making some errors on the rhetorical and syntactic level. If Ignacio had been coached to write in as controlled and accurate a manner as possible for a TOEFL TWE test, he may have tested at 4.5. What was remarkable about Ignacio was that he consistently tried to

write thoughtfully and creatively in spite of his linguistic handicap. His learning curve was also significantly higher than Ismael's, suggesting that L1 literacy and previous formal education are better indicators of how quickly a student will acquire L2 literacy than L2 communicative competence.

In summary, although the adult education ESL program did not have any formal evaluation procedures, methods were developed to allow both the students and the teacher/researcher to evaluate the project. Questionnaires enabled the students to evaluate not only their own progress and ongoing needs, but also how they had been taught. Teacher/researcher analysis of representative student work utilizing the description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) and the TOEFL TWE criteria indicated that the lessons had provided challenging learning opportunities for students regardless of their literacy level. The Educational Testing Service [ETS] has found that whereas the TOEFL test could provide a quantitative analysis of disparate skills, an additional essay test (the TOEFL TWE) is necessary to ascertain how well students can write. In like manner, the holistic evaluation of student writing probably provided a more accurate assessment of how a student might complete literacy tasks confronted in daily life than a quantitative analysis of disparate skills.

After I had made my summative assessment of the portfolios of Ignacio and Ismael, I again reviewed the original 14 portfolios from which these two were selected. Since these 14 portfolios contained very few assignments in common, it was not possible to evaluate lessons across portfolios. However, using the TOEFL TWE holistic scoring guidelines for summative portfolio evaluation I found that Ignacio and Ismael were indeed representative of the two major literacy configurations and that the TOEFL TWE scores were almost identical for students with similar initial literacy levels.

7.8. Conclusion

Open-entry open-exit adult education necessitates innovative approaches to research. A quantitative summative approach emphasizing the testing of a hypothesis using procedures such as tests, the results of which could be statistically analyzed, was shown not to be appropriate for research in this setting. The emphasis was instead upon ongoing formative data-based evaluation of a pilot adult education intermediate ESL class through use of portfolios, which made it possible to monitor developments and make innovative changes as needed throughout the project. Individual student portfolios contained all written work: a needs analysis intake questionnaire, spelling tests, written tests, letters, content-based questionnaires, and a final student class evaluation questionnaire. These portfolios were used not only to develop literacy and progress profiles of each student, but also to evaluate the extent to which the teacher-generated materials and the approach used reflected the principles for which they had been written. While a concentration upon synthetic-structural teaching would have led to a greater emphasis upon accuracy, the

course was designed to develop the student's abilities to use the language effectively (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992: 130).

Model lessons consisted of carefully constructed prewriting activities involving orality and literacy, followed by a writing assignment which all students could complete successfully. The majority of the students such as Ismael, who had the more common combination of high L2 oral communicative competence but limited L1/L2 literacy, made slow but steady progress in attaining literacy. The few students such as Ignacio, who had lower L2 oral communicative competence but higher L1/L2 literacy were challenged by the open-ended nature of the same lessons. Their more rapid gains in becoming literate suggest that previous education and L1 literacy are a greater factor in the attainment of L2 literacy than L2 oral communicative competence.

The description of literacy proved useful not only in developing lessons, but also in assessing what learning had occurred. While these judgments were based upon a holistic consideration of the students' writing, the affective domain should also be considered. In an academic setting, focus is usually upon academic progress. In an adult education ESL setting, attention should be placed not only upon increases in ESL literacy, but also upon how the student perceives the educational setting, his ability to learn, and how his experiences will affect his own interaction with educational institutions in the future. The regular attendance of Ismael and Ignacio, their positive written evaluations, and their enthusiastic participation in class all indicated that they valued the way in which the experimental class was taught.

In conclusion, the description of literacy provided a sound foundation upon which to design lessons for students with very disparate levels of literacy. The recycling of concepts throughout content-based thematic units made class cohesion and individual progress possible with the ever-changing open-entry open-exit adult education students. Formative qualitative evaluation as well as a summative assessment of the complete portfolios of two students at either end of the literacy spectrum indicated the validity of the theoretical description of literacy, the usefulness of the materials based upon this construct, and their effectiveness in teaching the target population.

¹ American immigrants have often voted on the basis of ethnicity in the hope that a fellow countryman would keep one's interests in mind. Party machines were predicated on their ability to deliver the ethnic vote.

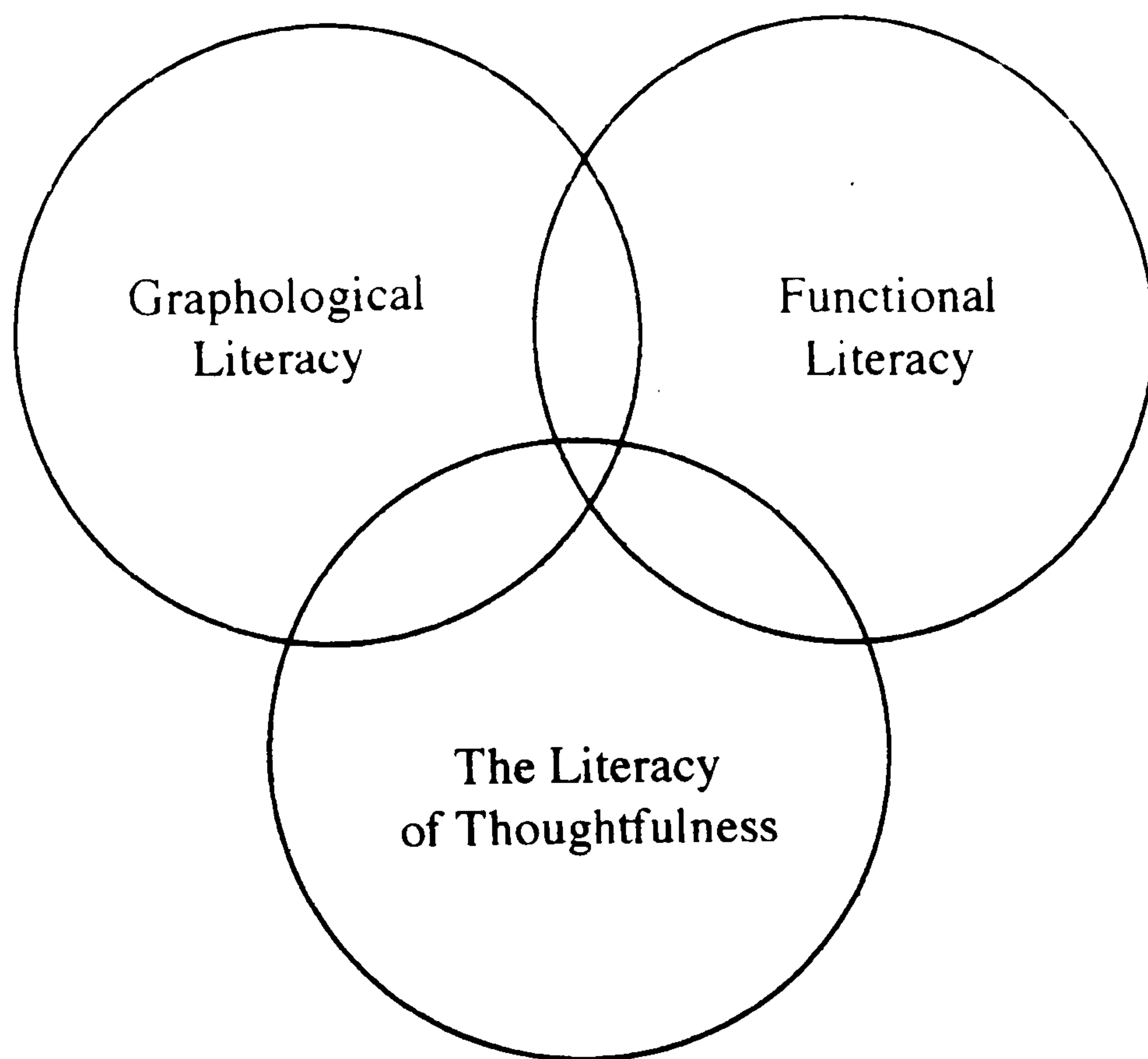
Chapter 8: Summary and Discussion

8.1 Literacy from the perspectives of theory and practice

This thesis represents an attempt to come to terms with a practical pedagogic problem by referring to theoretical principles and to subject my own experience to critical reflection. As stated at the outset, the overarching research question was how one might most effectively teach ESL literacy to adult Mexican immigrants who have adequate English oral communicative skills, but generally have very limited L1/L2 literacy (Chapter 1).

Related literature indicates that while much research has been done on developing reading and writing skills of school age children and refining the EFL/ESL academic writing of university students, little research has been done on the ESL literacy needs of adult immigrants in the United States other than rather global assertions about the need for literacy — and particularly functional literacy. As a classroom teacher I felt the need to understand literacy from a linguistic perspective. This would provide a theoretical basis for a pilot course in which I, as a teacher/researcher, would assess student needs, find an appropriate syllabus framework, design materials, modify them utilizing formative evaluation, and ultimately develop a means of summative assessment. The constraints of the open-entry open-exit setting led to the decision to utilize portfolios to document and assess the teacher-research project.

As practice must be informed by theory (and conversely theory must be realized in practice), the first research priority was to gain a greater theoretical understanding of literacy from a linguistic perspective. Literacy has been defined in this dissertation as having three aspects — graphological literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness (Chapters 2-4). Graphological literacy consists of the mechanical skills of spelling, punctuation, and penmanship. Functional literacy involves those document and prose processing abilities needed by an individual in his society — and for the purposes of this study, within a highly technological and literate California community in the 1990s. The literacy of thoughtfulness extends beyond the skill level to a utilization of literacy in thinking critically and creatively. In this respect literacy can further an awareness of one's rights, opportunities, and responsibilities as a member of a society. These three aspects of literacy are not thought of as isolated, but rather as interrelated:



Literacy is not simply an abstract concept but always operates within a social context. Consequently the validity of the linguistic definition is dependent upon the extent to which it can be made operational in the particular circumstances with which I am concerned. This necessitates a comprehension of the literacy needs and socio-economic background of the sample group of students as well as an understanding of the institutional instructional mandates (Chapter 5). The rationale for providing free adult education ESL instruction in California is shown to have two underlying premises — Americanization and empowerment. Americanization through social integration into the American culture implies not only assimilation but also the mastery of English, including the literacy needed to become part of the work force. Empowerment of the individual refers to the development of one's potential as well as the ability to take an active part in a participatory democracy.

While Americanization and empowerment might at first appear to be antithetical concepts, they are both to some degree involved in each of the three aspects of literacy. Americanization is a major factor in graphological literacy, for the literate must adhere to American norms of spelling and punctuation. Functional literacy implies an understanding of and a willingness to follow American literacy norms for documents and prose encountered in the workplace and in the daily round. Functional literacy also posits a grasp of the schemata necessary to complete such tasks. Therefore, functional literacy can denote not only the assimilation but also the potential empowerment of an immigrant as he comes to understand and operate effectively in multicultural society (Chapter 5).

As to the third aspect of the literacy of thoughtfulness, critical and creative thinking are not dependent upon literacy. However, the inability to write anything down for one's own present or future purposes and the inability to read what others have written seriously limit an individual's access to knowledge and his ability to share his thoughts with others.

Coupling critical and creative thinking with literacy can be empowering. While literacy can increase an individual's understanding and assertion of his rights, as well as increasing his opportunities in a society, a person must also understand the necessity of taking responsibility for his actions. Empowerment should not be equated with personal aggrandizement but with social responsibility. As indicated in the above diagram, the literacy of thoughtfulness does not stand in isolation from graphological or functional literacy, but its potential can only be realized through graphological and functional literacy. Individuality finds expression once the social conventions of literate behavior are mastered. Independence acts against a necessary background of conformity.

The interrelationship between the aspects of literacy can also be visualized as a Möbius strip. If the strip represents the topic under consideration, what is visible, important, or relevant may in one instance be more related to functional literacy and in another be closer to the literacy of thoughtfulness, but all three aspects of literacy are inextricably intertwined when ideas or information are conveyed in written form.

The practical validity of my linguistic description of literacy would be dependent upon its usefulness in the classroom, for the relationship between theory and practice can only be realized through the activity of teaching (Widdowson 1990: 30). Following this conceptual frame I designed, taught, and collected data from a pilot adult education intermediate ESL course for almost 2 academic years from September 1991 to December 1993 (with the exception of the April - June 1993 term). Further insights into the needs of such students were gained while teaching these students from 1994 to 1996.

The linguistic description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) provided the theoretical basis for syllabus design and materials development for this pilot adult education ESL course for intermediate students, most of whom had adequate L2 oral communicative competence, limited L1 literacy, and even lower L2 literacy; however the needs of the few with high L1 literacy and moderate L2 literacy would also have to be met (Chapter 1, 6). The description of literacy with its underlying premises of Americanization and empowerment (Chapter 5) provided the theoretical basis for a curriculum designed to develop literacy skills which would be used not only in the classroom, but which would also be useful in the daily round at home and at work (Chapter 6).

A traditional syllabus is often linear, based upon regular student attendance, homework, tests, and some sort of evaluation at the end of the term. By contrast, a distinguishing feature of the Santa Barbara Adult Education ESL Program was its open-entry, open-exit policy which allowed students to enter classes at any time during the year. Consequently rather than developing a rigid syllabus, a syllabus framework was formed containing major themes that could be recycled. While open-entry open-exit could be considered a constraint, the necessity to design a course around a framework rather than a set syllabus was pedagogically liberating. The dialectal relationship between theory and practice implies that teaching is a cyclic activity involving observation, reflection, further planning, and subsequent teaching. The syllabus framework assisted in adapting each

lesson to meet the needs of those students present on any given day, rather than simply following a pre-established lesson plan. In this process the English language was the medium of instruction through which a content-based curriculum was mediated.

Materials were written and rewritten to make them as appropriate as possible for the intermediate ESL students with diverse literacy levels. Ongoing interaction with the students helped the teacher/researcher to understand how students approached and completed the literacy tasks. This facilitated modification of the syllabus and the teacher-generated materials as needed.

The impetus for the assessment techniques used in this project stem from the desire to document and evaluate the process of learning as seen recent research studies in alternative (non-quantitative) forms of assessment (Calfee and Masuda, in press). Written documentation of the research was provided by individual student portfolios which contained all assignments. It was posited that complete portfolios of all written work would provide data on how the students acquired literacy by documenting how they approached and completed literacy tasks, for there is a growing realization that the ability to write text is an at least if not more important indicator of literacy than students' ability to answer multiple-choice test questions correctly (e.g. the development of the TOEFL TWE after the standard TOEFL).

However, unlike an outside grader (such as a TOEFL TWE reader) who bases his evaluation strictly on what was written, as a teacher/researcher I was able to do formative evaluations of portfolios throughout the project in order to assess each student's progress, the influence of his educational and socio-cultural background as seen in his literacy profile, and the extent to which his needs were being met by the ever-evolving teacher-generated materials. In this way it was possible to analyze students' written work and to factor in how students approached and completed assignments in class. The teacher-generated lessons on the whole proved more challenging and less frustrating than workbook pages from Practical English, which were not designed to meet the needs of these limited-literacy students.

Portfolios provided an unobtrusive way to document students' emergent literacy. These collections of student work were used for formative evaluation in the ongoing review of individual students as well as for comparisons between students. Insights gained led to informed modification of how the pilot course was taught and how teacher-generated materials were written. When the project was written up, close in-depth analysis of select portfolios provided a comprehensive description of what occurred during the research project. Outside researchers often have limited contact with the students, but teachers who have ongoing contact with students become very familiar with their work. The resultant understanding of proficiency levels within the class facilitated the choice of representative portfolios to assess the project. The portfolios of two students representing the least and most literate members of the class — Ignacio and Ismael — were analyzed in detail to show how qualitative evaluation of their work could be used to assess initial L1/L2 literacy, to

monitor individual progress, to record the evolution of literacy lessons, to consider the students' evaluation of their own progress and of the course, and finally to make a summative evaluation of the project. Validity was verified by a cross-comparison of writing samples of Ismael and Ignacio with students who had similar literacy levels (Chapter 7).

Portfolios were used not only to document and assess the students' emergent literacy, but also to develop student literacy profiles in order to gain a better understanding of the students as individuals, their L1/2 educational/literacy background, their present and future L2 literacy needs, and their literacy learning curves.

8.2. Conclusions utilizing portfolio analysis

The use of portfolios for the documentation and formative evaluation of the research project was premised upon the belief that classroom teachers, as members of a professional community, have the ability to assess student achievement by means of less-than-fully standardized methods and use these assessments for the ongoing modification of an instructional program in order to meet the needs of a target audience (Calfee and Masuda, in press). In order to provide an overview of the portfolio analysis process in context the portfolios will now be reconsidered from different perspectives for purposes of summative evaluation. Findings relating to the efficacy of the linguistic description of literacy as the foundation for the syllabus framework and lesson design will be considered below. However, a focus upon academic attainment alone would not provide insight into why students had different learning curves nor upon the motivational and social consequences of the instruction. The very notion of a learner-centered curriculum (Nunan 1988) underscores the need to move beyond pre-specified plans to a consideration of who the learners are and how their needs might best be met. Therefore the usefulness of developing literacy profiles will also be discussed.

The portfolios provided the basis for a summative evaluation of the research project from the vantage of the three aspects of the linguistic description of literacy — graphological literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness. While graphological literacy has been largely ignored in linguistic research and textbooks for intermediate ESL students, portfolios were initially analyzed with a focus upon spelling, punctuation, and penmanship. The instructional emphasis upon American phoneme-grapheme relationships (including the differences between Spanish and English) and the basic rules for American spelling led to a marked improvement in spelling by the limited L2 literacy students.

\ Most students entered the class with no understanding of the basic principles of English spelling and many students thought English spelling was quite random, especially in comparison with Spanish. Although English lacks a close phoneme-grapheme correspondence, consonants sounds are written the same most of the time. Spelling

instruction focused upon phonics generalizations governing long and short vowel sounds as well as changes required when adding suffixes.

Phonics was incorporated in many ways into the curriculum. Choral spelling of words such as those stemming from a comparison of the Look Again Pictures (Olsen 1984) helped students learn the names of the alphabet letters. With safety in numbers, students became willing to participate in calling out the spelling of words and increased their ability to spell correctly. An atmosphere of mutual trust was important for students who lacked confidence in their ability to read and write English.¹

Multi-level irregular verb spelling tests helped the intermediate level ESL students, who often only spoke using the present tense, overcome fossilized errors and begin to use other tenses. Teacher-generated tests made it possible to choose verbs which emphasized spelling patterns that had just been discussed or which were consistently causing difficulty. Tests were designed for all ranges of ability from simply copying the present tense to writing the present perfect correctly. As the emphasis was upon individual improvement rather than grading according to a preset norm, every one was encouraged and challenged to improve upon his past performance.

The increased self-confidence and ability to sound out words in reading and spelling assisted students in completing functional literacy tasks. Although little research has been done on the teaching of spelling to adult ESL students, incorporating the phonics approach (now increasingly implemented again in American primary education) into adult ESL literacy instruction deserves careful consideration. The question would then no longer be whether to teach grapheme-phoneme correspondences, but when and how this could be done most effectively by making use of knowledge transferable from L1. This pedagogical innovation would, however, necessitate a greater command of phonics principles by ESL teachers than evidenced during the research project testing (Chapter 2).

Instruction focusing upon the English written norm of the complete sentence helped limited literacy students learn to write in complete sentences and to use appropriate punctuation for declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentences. While the rules governing punctuation are more fluid than those for spelling, a command of the basic precepts can be seen as conformity to a norm and the basis for increased facility in using the written word.

Emphasis upon penmanship led to neater written work. While this focus could be seen as an attempt to assimilate students into the given American norm, neat and legible penmanship is often (even if fallaciously) equated with a command of English literacy and intelligence.

The second aspect of literacy — functional literacy — refers to the ability to complete daily literacy tasks, two-thirds of which involve document processing and one-third prose text. While graphological literacy was evaluated in terms of mechanical skills, functional literacy is culture specific and more dependent upon content-based schematic knowledge. Therefore, a lesson on how to complete a functional literacy task would also

include information about the implications of doing so and would require relevant schematic knowledge of the services of the individual or institution giving or asking for information. How to complete a functional literacy task such as writing a check relates to Americanization, while understanding the possible advantages and disadvantages of having a bank account relates to empowerment.

Some lessons were designed around specific authentic texts such as pay stubs and utility bills, but it was impossible to prepare students for all the texts they might have to read or write. Therefore the decision was made to develop the ability to complete literacy tasks by teaching students how to approach a written text, how to understand what had been read, and how to write an appropriate response.

As many functional literacy tasks in the daily round involve a combination of orality and literacy, most lessons included discussion, choral reading of text, paired oral activities and then a written component. Oral communicative competence and functional literacy are often used concurrently and the completion of many functional literacy lessons was dependent upon some degree of oral communicative competence.

The third aspect — the literacy of thoughtfulness — was incorporated into most of the experimental lessons. A comparison of the portfolios of Ismael and Ignacio showed that it is possible to develop writing lessons which can be completed by the least literate, yet challenge the most literate. Students learned how to use their literacy in a consideration of complex problems they might encounter in everyday life. For example, questionnaires and/or check-lists requiring only limited literacy were utilized to keep record of discussions of complicated issues such as those surrounding presidential campaigns. Finally carefully constructed evaluation questionnaires encouraged students who were not used to self- and class evaluation to a thoughtful consideration of how they learned best, what they learned, and what they would like to learn. While the literacy of thoughtfulness can empower students to think and act more critically and creatively, such empowerment is dependent upon the more Americanizing aspects of written language developed through graphological and functional literacy. Less emphasis has been placed upon critical and creative thinking in adult education ESL instruction than in L1 education from the primary school to the university, yet portfolio documentation showed that the literacy of thoughtfulness could be incorporated successfully into experimental lessons.

From the perspective of the teacher/researcher, the proposed construct of literacy, combined with the adult education ESL mandates of Americanization and empowerment, provided sound points of reference for developing a pilot class in ESL literacy. Ongoing portfolio analysis not only enabled, but forced the teacher/researcher to consider the extent to which her theory could be realized in practice. Formative evaluation of written work led to modifications of how lessons were designed and aspects of literacy were taught. For example, while the principles of American spelling did not change, how they were explained in class evolved over time to the final relatively simple way of teaching long and short vowel sounds as well as the orthographic changes required by the addition of

suffixes. Similarly the ongoing review of teacher-generated materials did not lead to a change in the basic lesson framework, but the emphasis of lessons was modified in order to incorporate the three aspects of literacy more effectively. Ongoing portfolio examination supports the premise that formative contextual evaluation based upon observations of what students can do in a range of situations is more helpful in course modification than results of decontextualized language tests (Law and Eckes 1995).

The portfolios were also reevaluated from the perspective of literacy profiles. In a more traditional academic setting placement tests and/or course prerequisites ensure that there are similarities in the educational backgrounds, learning experiences, and current proficiency levels of the students. However in the open-entry open-exit setting new students were placed in the class almost daily simply on the basis of their general L2 oral communicative competence. It was posited at the outset of the program that a greater understanding of the student's educational and literacy backgrounds would not only help the teacher/researcher understand who the students were but also might provide insight into how quickly they would develop literacy and how best to utilize their limited L1/L2 literacy in this process.

Throughout the research project L2 oral communicative competence gave little indication of a student's L1/L2 literacy. As most worked as laborers or in the service industry, they all heard a similar kind of English in the community and adopted the verbal patterns they heard so that differences in socio-economic backgrounds which might have been evidenced in their spoken Spanish were not apparent in their spoken English. There were no great differences in the rates at which students improved in L2 oral communicative competence.

However, there were radical differences in initial L2 literacy and literacy learning curves of the students. When I started teaching young adult Mexican immigrants (before the beginning of the research project) I was initially very perplexed by their inability to perform literate tasks in English in spite of prewriting activities which had been quite adequate in more academic adult ESL settings and with NS primary school children. The explanation came when a sample résumé indicated that a student had only completed one year of school. When I questioned if he had indeed gone to school so little, he assured me that such was the case. This led to the evolution of the needs intake questionnaire which not only gave information on previous education, but also provided English and Spanish writing samples.

If the teacher has a different educational, socio-economic, and cultural background than the students, she has more difficulty in understanding her students' literacy resources and needs than if she teaches students similar to herself. Furthermore, the home and community environment has a profound influence on the learning of those language structures, uses, and literacy practices that are needed in the classroom (Heath 1983). Profiles developed from the intake needs questionnaires, student evaluation questionnaires, and lessons specifically designed to elicit information about students' educational and

literacy backgrounds showed that the majority of the students came from rural Mexican villages.

They had grown up in what was primarily an oral culture. Most of their parents had limited if any schooling, did little if any reading and writing, and could provide little modeling for or assistance with school-based literacy tasks. The majority of the students had had very few years of formal schooling because their parents needed them to help work the land. Students wrote very little outside of class —not even shopping lists. They tended simply to remember everything they needed to know and to convey messages to others orally, even if through a third party, rather than by writing. Similarly there was little perceived need for formal reading in their life world.

Consequently these young adult Mexicans had very few L1 literacy skills to build upon and had limited resources to help them develop graphological or functional literacy or to incorporate literacy into situations requiring creative or critical thinking. However, as immigrants to a highly technological and literate culture, they were constantly being made aware of their lack of literacy. Most took me aside within the first week to tell me that they couldn't read or write English (although they usually did not add that they had limited literacy skills in Spanish).

Such information indicated that limiting attention to academic attainment would neglect affective and social outcomes. While developing L2 literacy may have been the articulated goal of instruction, students would only stay in the program if they developed sufficient self-confidence in their ability to become literate and they would only come to utilize reading and writing in their lives if they learned how to approach and complete formal literacy tasks. Therefore lessons had to be designed to ensure success even for beginners. Students were continually encouraged to assist each other and got help from the teacher whenever needed so that they could complete every writing assignment.

Testing was not encouraged in the adult education program and was intentionally not used in the research project because the emphasis was constantly on developing a cooperative learning environment and emphasizing what a student had learned and could work on next rather than stressing a student's shortcomings. This is consonant with a growing interest in devising methods of assessment that place greater weight on 'growing' than 'grading' (Wiggins 1993, Glaser and Silver 1994, Tittle 1994).

All this is not to suggest that a policy of 'anything goes' was operational in this program. Conscientious efforts were made to help students improve their handwriting and spelling as well as to encourage them to write text. Utilizing assessment to help rather than to judge is in accord with research indicating that the most appropriate location for the assessment of students achievement is in the classroom context, where the primary task of teachers is to support student learning (Calfee and Masuda, in press).

In summary, this final evaluation suggests that a teacher can not only become actively involved in the dialectic between theory and practice, but also learn through the process. The holistic analysis of student portfolios indicates progress in graphological

literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness. While these are all aspects of the cognitive domain, a positive impact on the affective domain is suggested by the steady attendance of a core of students in contrast with a lower retention rate by other teachers (Scott 1995). Positive class evaluations at the end of each term and a perceptible increase in literacy self-confidence of the students in the project as evidenced by their willingness to attempt and complete writing assignments were both also indicators of the efficacy of the project.

8.3. Limitations of research in an open-entry open-exit setting

Throughout the research project the description of literacy (Chapters 2-4) provided an effective basis for developing the syllabus framework, designing lessons, creating materials, and evaluating student work. Limitations reflected the problems of doing research in an open-entry open-exit adult education setting, which precluded use of a set sequential syllabus. Fluctuating attendance made it impossible to hold students accountable for everything that had been covered in a term. The teacher had access to the students only during class time because the building was unlocked for just the two hours when classes were held. Finally the program administrators did not encourage any research which would involve outside informants who would observe, record, or videotape classes. The rationale for this resistance to ongoing research was the administration's declared protectiveness of the students from disruptions in the instructional routine.

These limitations precluded procedures often used in research such as the use of control groups and the use of quantitative analysis of test data. Such methodological restrictions raise the question as to whether the research community is ignoring adult migrant learners in adult education settings because of the difficulty in doing traditional research. However ESL researchers in academic settings may study the EFL/ESL students in their institutions or school age children not only because these students are taught in more traditional settings but also because there is more funding available for such research projects.

One of the first large qualitative research projects with low-income underserved populations was Ways with Words, which chronicles problems and opportunities arising out of the American desegregation of the 1960s and 1970's as documented by teacher-trainers, teachers, children, and members of the community (Heath 1983). This research has indicated not only that qualitative research is possible, but that it may be more valuable than quantitative research in education:

Input factors (independent variables) are said to influence, predict, or determine output factors (dependent variables). . . . From an ethnographic perspective, the irony of such research is that it ignores the social and cultural context which created the input factors for individuals and groups. (Heath 1983: 8)

Teachers as researchers can become observers in their own domains and use what they learn to inform their motivations, practices, and programs of teaching by capitalizing on the

skills, values and knowledge of their students (Heath 1983: 12). While the present research was much smaller in scope than that of Heath, it also focused upon how to improve educational outcomes taking into account the educational setting and the needs of the students.

The summary and conclusions portions of this chapter (Chapter 8.1-2) were written from the teacher/researcher's perspective. Was there any way to ascertain the validity of conclusions drawn through triangulation? The portfolio analysis indicated an increase in L2 literacy by both Ismael and Ignacio, yet how much authenticated progress was made and would any student who attended any class regularly have made similar progress? Use of a control group was not possible in the adult education setting because there was no other class with a similar student body.

Summative quantitative evaluation would have been difficult because most students had not been present for the whole course since the open-entry open-exit policy enabled students to enter the class at any time and come whenever possible, which was not always regularly due to work and family responsibilities. On the basis of portfolio analysis and the literacy profiles I concluded that while all students had made some progress, those with higher L1 literacy and education made greater gains in developing L2 literacy. All students learned how to approach and complete literacy tasks better. Students with limited L1/L2 literacy and formal education usually began the class with minimal self-confidence, as evidenced by their comments to me when commencing literacy tasks, made greater gains in the affective domain than the more literate students whose greater academic training had provided them with the necessary skills in L1 which they simply had to transfer to L2. Although it has been argued that the classroom teacher should be given greater credit for her ability to assess student achievement (Calfee and Masuda, in press), I sought outside corroboration to support my conclusions from the classroom settings, from policy makers developing curriculum, and from others in the field of ESL.

Upon completion of the pilot project I interviewed the advanced ESL teacher to see if she perceived any differences in the students who had been in the pilot program. I also interviewed the ESL coordinator, who had given me permission to do the project and had followed it carefully. Finally I myself taught five consecutive ESL-citizenship classes in different ways and will explain the results.

First of all, the ESL teacher, who taught the advanced class before, during, and after the research project, was asked to evaluate the students who came to her class from the pilot class. Whereas the intermediate class was made up primarily of Mexicans, the advanced class contained about 1/2 Mexicans (most of whom had moved up from the intermediate class) and about 1/2 Europeans and Asians, many of whom were here as foreign students and who had much more academic training. Over the years the instructor had documented a low retention rate of Mexicans who lacked sufficient literacy or who exhibited lack of self-confidence when encountering literacy tasks. However, there was a much higher retention rate of the pilot project students who had a greater understanding of

how to approach and complete literacy tasks. Those who had been in the pilot program also had sufficient word attack skills to sound out words in reading and spelling, they could read short texts, and they knew how to organize their thoughts to write a short response using complete sentences in a paragraph (Clare 1995).

The ESL coordinator had been kept closely informed about the pilot class throughout the research project. She observed that the pilot class was the only intermediate ESL class in her adult education program which could accommodate such diverse literacy levels successfully and she had consequently placed anyone with intermediate oral communicative competence in my class. She had closely monitored class retention rates and the high retention rate in the experimental class indicated most of the students placed in the class stayed — a strong indicator of effective teaching in adult education. She was also the substitute teacher for my class, which gave her the opportunity to implement my lesson plans and to monitor the development of literacy. She found the classroom routine I had developed gave the students security and confidence. Finally she was impressed by the students' written class evaluations which I had developed but which were not required by the program. Students expressed gratitude for the pilot project's focus on the development of writing skills in their course evaluations (Scott 1995).

Whereas it seemed appropriate that all intermediate ESL teachers accommodate a wide range of L2 literacy, this did not occur at the other large Santa Barbara adult education ESL sites. I also found that in the local community college ESL program the students were placed on the basis of L2 literacy rather than L2 oral communicative competence. Consequently many of the community college ESL students with high oral communicative competence who on the basis of their L2 literacy were placed in beginning writing classes dropped out, frustrated because most of the class was just learning to speak and understand English. Such evidence substantiated my belief that the needs of students with limited ESL literacy are best served if they are placed according to their ESL oral communicative competence and that intermediate ESL courses can be taught to meet the needs of students with diverse literacy levels.

Finally, after completion of the pilot project I taught five consecutive ESL-citizenship classes, which were designed to prepare immigrants to pass the written civics and history test required of all who want to become citizens. This written test consisted of twenty multiple choice questions and two dictation sentences. When I began teaching I was instructed to focus upon the subject matter and to leave skills instruction such as phonics up to the other ESL teachers. After it became evident that the class was trying to memorize separately each of the twenty-five sample dictation sentences I had gleaned of past tests, I grouped possible dictation sentences on the basis of similar words. When the written test was given at the end of the first term everyone could write the memorized sample sentence, but many students made spelling errors on any new sentence not on my list. Furthermore when students came back to class the next term to prepare for the oral interview, I found that many had forgotten how to write the sentences, indicating that memorization cannot be

equated with an understanding and/or mastery of American spelling. Consequently for the next four terms I refined the way phonics was taught as the basis for dictation practice and soon almost everyone passed both sentences. Such results support my earlier assertion (Chapter 2) that it is important to teach students why English is spelled as it is rather than just asking them to memorize the spelling of words.

In the area of curriculum development, my supervisor also indicated her support of my approach by asking me to develop new intermediate ESL curriculum guidelines. Although I initially thought I would be able to utilize what I had learned from the pilot project to the fullest, I found that my recommendations would have to fit into the new California curriculum mandates known as model standards (Smith 1992). As the model standards did not include a phonics component above the beginning ESL level in adult education, my supervisor did not accept my recommendation to include it in the local adult education intermediate ESL curriculum, although she had wholeheartedly supported the ways I had devised to teach phonics and had never questioned the validity of my approach. This indicates that although literacy research, policy, and practice should in principle be closely related and mutually supportive, they have in fact developed independently of one another and remain separated by mutual misunderstandings. Policy goals do not always reflect actual needs of students (Ryan 1991: 36).

There is, however, a growing interest in phonics. Advocates of phonics-based curricula are gaining public support because research done with primary school pupils has shown that the emphasis upon the whole language approach has left many children with inadequate decoding skills. The California Department of Education mandated the inclusion of phonics in the elementary school curriculum in 1994 which substantiated my premise that phonics instructions is valuable in teaching basic literacy. And as an indication of how educational policies change from year to year and from policy maker to policy maker, in 1995 an official of the Adult Education Division of the California Department of Education expressed interest in my development of phonics in-service materials for adult education ESL teachers (Bartlett 1995).

As one of five California State Department of Education ESL-citizenship teacher-trainers I consistently (but unsuccessfully) argued for the inclusion of phonics in the state curriculum recommendations. Recently I developed a district ESL-citizenship curriculum with a strong phonics component, which was accepted. My supervisor acknowledged the usefulness of phonics and felt that component could be included in the curriculum as there were no state provisions specifically excluding it.

Finally my recent presentations at conferences on the pilot project in general and the phonics approach in particular have been well received.² This suggests that other teachers increasingly recognize the validity of the approach.

In conclusion, although the open-entry open-exit setting provided constraints in the design and execution of the research project and also precluded more typical methods of

triangulation, the observations given above point to the validity and timeliness of the pilot adult education intermediate ESL class in terms of current educational theory.

8.4. Pedagogic recommendations

Any statements about the practical applicability of this research must be tempered by the observation that 'there is no *one* best way of teaching' . . . [and] 'there is no *one* best system of schooling in a democracy' (Cuban 1995: 7). Over the last century practitioners and policy makers have repeatedly confronted situations they defined as problems. They have attempted to solve them only to see later generations of reformers attack the same problems or sometimes the consequences of their predecessors' reforms. 'Such recurring messy situations' have been called *dilemmas* in so far as they are 'conflict-filled situations that require choices because competing, highly prized values . . . cannot be fully satisfied'. This is because constraints such as time, money, laws, cultural and political assumptions limit what can be done at any particular time (Cuban 1995: 7). Dilemmas lead to choices (often moral), which result in good-enough compromises, not perfect solutions. As a result, when coping with dilemmas we must sometimes 'satisfice' or sacrifice in order to satisfy (Simon 1957: 204-5). Consequently more often than not we end up managing recurrent dilemmas rather than solving problems (Lyons 1990, Wong 1995). Therefore pedagogic recommendations on the basis of the research project will be presented using the perspectives of *dilemmas of purpose*, *dilemmas of strategy*, and *dilemmas over results* (Cuban 1995).

Dilemmas of purpose often occur because educational institutions are supposed to reach inherently competing goals:

. . . graduates [are] to be responsive to authority but not docile; to be fair-minded in accepting the differing beliefs and behaviors of others but also committed to a common core of belief; to be loyal to community values but willing to question and even diverge from them; to follow rules but be flexible in responding to new situations. (Cuban 1995: 7)

Fundamental underlying differences in values, goals, and ideological orientations have already been discussed from the perspective of the often conflicting American adult education ESL mandates of Americanization and empowerment. There is little unanimity over the ideological orientation of adult literacy ESL programs with the result that the initial *dilemma of purpose* can be seen from three perspectives: that of traditional educators, who support the status quo and the use of textbooks developed to prepare students for academic English courses; that of radical educators; and that of liberal educators.³

As a teacher-researcher, I believe that careful examination of most adult education ESL literacy programs will indicate not only that change is possible but that innovation may lead to improvement. My research project involving an innovative approach to adult ESL literacy instruction leaves me with little choice but to reject a stance that precludes change for the better.

The second position, that of the radical educators and reformers, holds that schools are institutions of the dominant social group which seeks to reproduce the existing social order; consequently curricula, including literacy curricula, must address issues of social justice explicitly (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994). Freire traces the roots of illiteracy and poverty to oppressive social structures which create inequalities in power and opportunity favoring the dominant group. It is posited that adult literacy programs can empower members of the working class through a process of analyzing existing political realities and then challenging those realities by working for social change (Freire and Macado 1987).

While the existence of social inequities is undeniable, any program serving large numbers of undocumented immigrants will have difficulty in adopting such a radical stance. Students living outside of the legal system are not in a position to challenge the government and/or make complaints about employers or landlords as those actions might well put them at risk of deportation. This is not to say that an adult education ESL class could not utilize the literacy of thoughtfulness to consider such problems, but illegal immigrants, unlike the Brazilian slum dwellers with whom Freire worked, have more limited possibilities for social transformation. Therefore an articulation of purpose which advocates adult education ESL literacy instruction as a means of radical transformation of society is not realistically addressing the constraints undocumented immigrant students face. While ESL students need to understand that in the United States everyone has equal protection under the law, any undocumented alien who brings attention to himself with governmental authorities faces deportation.

This leaves us with the third main alternative, that of the liberal educators who believe educational institutions are democratic (or potentially democratic) and that they can provide students with better life opportunities. Such educators believe it is possible to reform schools through a greater understanding of the students' background experiences (Schwandt 1994). Learners' strengths and prior knowledge can form a basis for learning as documented in ethnographic research on cultural and contextual variability of literacy practices and discourse styles (e.g. Heath 1983, Reder 1987).

While I support the liberal perspective, *dilemmas of purpose* remain because *the literacy myth* assumes acquisition of ESL literacy will have definite outcomes (Chapter 5). To posit that literacy will, in and of itself, lead to improved employment fails to recognize macroeconomic factors such as recession and unemployment patterns, social factors such as job discrimination, and actual dynamics of hiring and job retention. To suggest literacy will enable a student to transform his life through individual effort or that increased self-worth generated by the acquisition of literacy will lead to a greater sense of responsibility implies that empowerment springing from literacy will inevitably enable an individual to pull himself up by his 'psychological bootstraps' (Auerbach 1995: 650). Positing such unrealistic outcomes further complicates *dilemmas of purpose*. My pedagogical recommendation would be to support provisions for ESL adult literacy not because they guarantee a sounder future, but because lack of literacy seriously limits opportunities within

the workplace and mainstream society. Individuals who lack proficiency in the official language(s) of government and business are often placed at a disadvantage in situations where mastery of the dominant language is involved. Although the United States has no official statute designating an official language, in practice English is that language.

Dilemmas of purpose can also occur if the goals are unacceptable. Educators promoting cultural maintenance and negotiation sometimes argue against any literacy approach that will lead to cultural assimilation. However I propose that while promoting mastery of English literacy may be seen as Americanization, understanding English literacy conventions and mastering the appropriate skills and capabilities will lead to empowerment.

A final major *dilemma of purpose* to consider is whether highly technological and literate nations world-wide should spend money educating illegal immigrants. Because one key to stemming immigration lies in improving socioeconomic and political conditions in the less developed societies (Castles and Miller 1993: 84), some would prefer sending foreign aid over providing adult education ESL instruction for undocumented aliens. Within the American context in particular and the developed world more generally I suggest that if countries are willing tacitly to allow illegal immigrants to be part of the work force and to pay taxes, then governments should also be willing to provide these immigrants the same adult education literacy opportunities which are available to the rest of society.

As an attempt to resolve the *dilemmas of purpose* which I have raised, I would recommend that adult education ESL literacy (or the appropriate L2 literacy instruction in other developed countries) should be offered in a program based upon a liberal perspective which takes into account the students' cultural and socio-economic background while capitalizing on their strengths and prior knowledge to develop L2 literacy. This is not to suggest that other types of programs have not had a very positive influence in other settings, such as Freire's program in Brazil, nor to suggest that programs should not be somewhat eclectic and be influenced by the work of others. Such varying influences will be discussed next in a consideration of the kinds of strategic dilemmas facing anyone making pedagogic recommendations about adult education literacy program for immigrants with limited L1/L2 literacy.

Dilemmas of strategy occur because a teacher must select from conflicting methods as she decides how to best achieve her objective of L2 literacy for the adult education intermediate ESL class. For present purposes, curriculum planning will be considered from the vantage of strategy although it is also intimately connected with educational goals. The proliferation of purported 'methods that work', to use the title of a book on the subject (Oller and Richard-Amato [1983] or see Richards and Rodgers [1989]), reinforces the contention that there is 'no *one* best way' for all students in all settings (Cuban 1995: 7). Furthermore any 'bullet' program model, which offers single practice solutions, fails to recognize the complexity of the acquisition of literacy (Auerbach 1995). Three major types of *dilemmas of strategy* surround curriculum planning, materials, and instructional

methodology. Any pedagogic recommendation to be given in each of these areas is dependent upon an understanding of the context of literacy.

Curriculum planning for any open-entry open-exit adult education ESL instruction requires moving from the conception of a predetermined syllabus to the development of a framework of concepts to be recycled as needed. While such a pedagogic recommendation might not be appropriate in all settings, this research project has indicated that constant reevaluation of what students have learned and need to learn can lead to a more fluid approach of curriculum design.

The extent to which students actively participate in the development of a 'learner-centered curriculum' (Nunan 1988) is in part influenced by their academic sophistication in knowing what they want or need to know. Some students with little formal education know they want to become more literate but are faced with a Platonic 'double ignorance' because they don't know what they don't know. The teacher may try through discussion, questionnaires, and writing samples to determine what students want or would like to learn, but ultimately it is the teacher who specifies the parameters of a course of study (Nunan 1988: 45).

Immigrant adult education students, in contrast to their more academic EFL counterparts, have often become skillful in negotiating meaning through utilization of their oral communicative competence. Therefore they have less need for group work to develop oral skills and a greater need to develop literacy. One cannot assume that limited L1/L2 literacy students know the steps involved in developing the ability to read and write English. Thus I would recommend that a teacher encourage learner participation in the development of a curriculum framework rather than following a set curriculum, but she must also realize that students may be unable to articulate their needs. These students are mature individuals who have a wealth of experience to draw upon and they should be respected as adult participants in the learning process. However teachers need to be able to perceive what students don't know and help them to learn what they need to become literate within a specific context (Auerbach 1995: 649).

Curriculum planning is, of course, based upon the determination of what needs to be learned and how, but the perceptions of researchers, administrators, policy makers, teachers, students, and textbook manufacturers often differ leading to further *dilemmas of strategy*. Even if from a linguistic perspective it is agreed that graphological and functional literacy as well as the literacy of thoughtfulness are all important, there is no unanimity about the relative importance of these three aspects of literacy.

In the case of graphological literacy, there is ongoing debate whether or not to include phonics in literacy instruction. In the last fifty years the pendulum has swung from an emphasis on phonics and primers to a whole language approach which discredits any focus on phonics, and back again. The dilemma occurs because not all students learn in the same way and not all teachers teach in the same way, so that no one approach is universally successful. In the rhetoric educators lose sight of the pedagogical guideline that 'the

optimum amount of phonics instruction . . . [an individual] should be exposed to is the minimum he needs to become an independent reader' (Heilman 1989: 2). To claim that spelling instruction is becoming irrelevant due to spell-checkers on computer word-processing software programs fails to recognize not only that most immigrant ESL students do not have access to computers but also that phonics provides a sound basis for learning to read and write English.

Research findings may to help to resolve *dilemmas of strategy*, such as choosing the best approach to teach graphological literacy, but only if the research has been done with similar kinds of students. For example, there has been very little research done with ESL literacy acquisition of adult immigrants. Yet there are dangers in simply utilizing research done with the more literate foreign students in American and British universities, who have mastered the basics of graphological literacy in order to pass the TOEFL test or its equivalent. University composition instructors have indicated that 'students' concern with error interferes with their composing processes, inhibits their ability to think, and in some cases leads to "writer's block" (Wyche-Smith 1987: 470) suggesting the need for greater concern with *what* the student says than how he says it. There is also purported to be a danger that 'students come to believe that what counts is not the thought they give to a topic, but how correctly that thought is conveyed' (Rose 1983: 115). This suggests an overemphasis upon rhetorical problems may overshadow the ideas university ESL students are trying to communicate (Díaz 1986, Raimes 1983).

However, university students have basic literacy skills which Freire's Brazilian slum dwellers and many adult ESL students lack. To emphasize simply getting one's ideas on paper, as evidenced by the growing interest in journal writing (Kitagawa 1989, Freeman and Freeman 1989), fails to recognize that even if adult students are told that this is an opportunity to express any ideas or concerns they have by thinking on paper, those with very limited literacy are often much less able and willing than a child to start writing on a blank page because they know they cannot spell and this is of great concern to them. While students need to be assured that their thoughts are valued despite their spelling, adult ESL students are usually very aware of their limited literacy and have come to class precisely because they want to learn how to read and write better. It should also be noted that while Freire is sometimes best remembered for his emphasis upon *conscientização*, his approach to reading and writing is based on phonics. He developed a method of using key words to master phonics *and* address ideas which enabled Brazilians to learn to read and write Portuguese and then utilize this knowledge in their daily lives (Freire 1975: 3-6).

The findings of this research project posit that graphological literacy cannot be ignored nor should it be seen as an end in and of itself because the ability to write and read words provides the basis for the acquisition of functional literacy and the literacy of thoughtfulness. This is not to suggest that there should be a return to rote-learning and the use of primers, where instructors read words and/or sentences aloud and learners repeat them without understanding (Archer and Cottingham 1966). The failure of that approach

may well be reflected in the World Bank's assessment of the limited effectiveness seen in literacy programs worldwide over the last 30 years (Abadzi 1994) and the widely-reported embarrassment adult learners feel when being instructed like children (Sekhobo 1996).

The broader pedagogical implication of this pilot project's incorporation of graphological literacy is that this aspect of literacy provides the foundation for literacy as a whole. The adult ESL student may, as a NS child, be able to speak English better than he can write it, but the approach needed to teach him the basic mechanical skills of literacy must tap his adult intelligence, draw upon his experience, and foster self-confidence while he develops graphological literacy. Whereas the student knows he wants to learn to read and write, much graphological literacy instruction must be teacher-directed. For example, the teacher knows how to help students understand phonics generalizations rather than leaving the student to learn to spell through rote memorization. Students' L2 oral communicative competence and any L1 literacy skills can be utilized in the learning process.

If L1 has no widely used written form (as is the case with many of the regional languages in developing countries) and/or if L1 illiteracy is widespread, individuals may have little to transfer to L2 and may also lack general exposure to the written form of L1 and/or L2, as is the case with the Berbers learning Arabic in Morocco (Wagner 1994) and the Hmong refugees in California after the Vietnamese War (Scott 1995). While teaching grapheme-phoneme correspondences has been shown to be an integral part of instruction in graphological literacy, the amount of emphasis needed is dependent upon the closeness of the grapheme-phoneme relationships in the target language, any previously learned languages, and the correspondences between them. The stress placed upon spelling is in large part determined by the closeness of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences. The weaker the relationship, the greater the attention that must be given to spelling.

Principles governing punctuation focus upon understanding the concept of the sentence which is the norm in written language, but not always in speech. Therefore, limited literacy students must master the concept of the sentence in order to use punctuation. As punctuation is similar in most alphabetic languages, basic schematic knowledge can be transferred from one language to another.

Graphological literacy provides the basis for 'breaking the code' so that one can communicate graphically by understanding what one reads and writing what one understands. The pedagogical emphasis thus is not upon mechanical memorization, but on developing the foundation needed to become functionally literate in one's context.

To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to *communicate* graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables — lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe — but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context. (Freire 1970: 112)

This research project suggests that students can become actively involved in the development of their graphological literacy as mature adults responsible for their own learning in cooperation with their fellow students.

When an individual can use literacy to understand his culture better and/or to complete the literacy tasks he confronts within his society, literacy gains value. A variety of strategies incorporating both oral communicative competence and functional literacy can be used to complete literacy tasks (Heath 1983, Wagner 1994).

As functional literacy is naturally associated with the tasks an individual confronts in his society, areas of emphasis will vary from one location to another. In a highly technological and literate society it is impossible to prepare students for all possible literacy tasks, so the emphasis might be upon how to approach such tasks utilizing lessons related to the students' cultural and socioeconomic context. In contrast, in many rural areas of non-literate societies students may have less need to complete literacy tasks on a daily basis, but can learn how literacy can help them visualize and discuss information they know orally. For example, REFLECT [Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques] (Archer and Cottingham 1996) has focused upon the development of 'community graphics' including maps of households, land use, or land tenancy. Calendars can indicate gender workloads, illnesses or income. Matrices can analyze local crops, credit sources or uses, and participation in local organizations. These can be used to stimulate discussion, group writing, related numeracy work, and action to address local problems. This indicates the importance of connecting functional descriptions of what exists in a community with a consideration of what might be done from a perspective of critical and creative thinking (Archer and Cottingham 1996: 6).

While there may be unanimity in the goal of functional literacy, *dilemmas of strategy* can occur when one considers how functional literacy might best be developed and to what extent the literacy of thoughtfulness can and/or should be included in the process. For example, literacy has been basic to micro-credit operations, which promote development among the poor of Third World countries by lending entrepreneurs small amounts of money to start small businesses such as ACCION International in the Americas (Day 1996) and the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (Bornstein 1996). Illiterate individuals are often powerless before money-lenders if they do not understand their written contracts or interest rates and are unable to get money from any other source. The necessary banking transactions require the completion of functional literacy tasks in adherence to a norm, thus acquainting an individual with local banking practices. Making thoughtful decisions on borrowing and lending is empowering. The four principles of the Grameen Bank — discipline, unity, courage and hard work — reemphasize that adults with emergent literacy have the maturity to understand that they can become more empowered within their communities as they take responsibility for their learning and cooperatively work to utilize literacy not only for their own benefit, but for the common good.

Such uses of literacy move away from the more traditional focus upon graphological literacy and memorization prevalent in some developing countries, particularly where such instruction has been tied to religious instruction as in the Quranic schools of Arabic speaking countries (Scribner and Cole 1981, Street 1984, Wagner 1994). Small-scale development projects such as those sponsored by the Grameen Bank show how emergent literacy can be used to influence not only one's economic status, but also interaction of individuals within a community leading to 'self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context' (Freire 1970: 112).

Immigrants from Third World countries to highly technological and literate societies not only are confronted with learning a new language, but also immediately face greater literacy demands at work and within the society as a whole. Furthermore such industrialized cultures are often more fragmented than more traditional societies, thus making it more difficult for immigrant ESL students to see how they can best utilize literacy for social transformation. The extent to which ESL literacy instruction can incorporate a discussion of social problems and their possible solutions is influenced not only by the students' immigration status, but also by the extent to which an adult education program embraces or tolerates advocacy of social change. While multiculturalism emphasizes respecting cultural differences rather than forcing assimilation, in reality the lack of L2 oral communicative competence and literacy is a potential constraint upon any immigrant attempting to interact with the mainstream society.

Dilemmas of strategy also occur when decisions must be made about areas of focus for functional literacy instruction. Schematic knowledge of topics requiring literacy usage and schematic knowledge of the basic features of commonly occurring genres of text in a given culture can help students approach and complete literacy tasks more effectively. An individual living in a highly technological society will confront more literacy-related tasks in the daily round than inhabitants of a rural community in a developing country. In either case, the ability to complete a functional literacy task facilitates assimilation into the mainstream of a culture, while an understanding of how and why it might be done relates to empowerment (Stromquist 1992).

If an emphasis is placed upon functional literacy, the teacher will need a greater command of the language and the subject matter under consideration than if the focus is upon graphological literacy and/or a sequential grammar approach. In addition to such pragmatic considerations, whether functional literacy is or can be taught with an emphasis upon empowerment (Freire 1972, 1973; Giroux 1983, 1988) or assimilation is influenced by the teacher's proclivities, educational policy, and cultural constraints.

The literacy of thoughtfulness, like functional literacy, could be taught in any setting. Emphasis upon critical and creative thinking would be dependent upon the teacher's willingness and ability to include the literacy of thoughtfulness into her curriculum, as well as an acceptance thereof by educational authorities and the community. *Sensitive* subjects such as illegal immigration and birth control can present problems with

program administrators in the United States, indicating that a decision to include many of the issues discussed in Chapter 6 and 7 might be questioned in more traditional cultures. Some totalitarian regimes are confronted today with a mismatch between the more traditional focus of teaching students what to think and the demand for critical thinking needed for innovation and economic growth. For example, some Chinese governmental officials fear loss of control if students learn *how* instead of *what* to think, but officials also perceive the importance of developing aptitudes necessary for research and development in the public and the private sector (Baruchli 1994: 1).

Students and teachers in more traditional societies may have difficulty making the transition to a pedagogic approach which incorporates the literacy of thoughtfulness. Those looking only at short term gain may question the inclusion of anything in the curriculum that is not incorporated in final evaluation procedures, the results of which can determine a student's academic future. Nevertheless, basic strategies such as a consideration of the good, bad, and interesting aspects of a question or trying to visualize a problem from another person's viewpoint could be tactfully incorporated in any setting. The self-directed teacher will make more open-ended demands on her students.

Those attempting to resolve *strategic dilemmas* about what to include in a syllabus and how to approach the material must also bear in mind that literacy is not just an abstract concept, but is used by specific individuals in a given social context. The needs and uses for graphological literacy, functional literacy, and the literacy of thoughtfulness manifest differently depending upon the L1/L2 languages, literacy levels, and culturally-determined educational opportunities and constraints. Nevertheless, the adult ESL literacy syllabus framework is applicable in many adult education settings.

Dilemmas of strategy also involve teaching materials. If a textbook is adopted, this influences *what* is taught and to some extent *how* it is taught. Administrators, policy makers, and/or teachers may adopt textbooks to ensure certain material is covered in a certain way. While ideally textbooks reflect the author's best pedagogical intentions, textbooks may also reflect what the publisher and/or author(s) think will sell rather than what might best meet students' needs. Expensive textbooks with complex page layouts, color graphics, and a mixture of manuscript and cursive such as Interchange (Richards et al 1990) may reflect the latest in book design capabilities, but overwhelm students with limited literacy and formal education while not addressing their real concerns. ESL textbooks for immigrants such as Collaborations (Weinstein-Shr and Huizenga 1996) may focus more upon topics of interest, but the complex layout may do more to confuse than entice. Finally, while textbooks now indicate what is covered in terms of grammar or language functions/structures, topics, and academic skills development, they usually do not pay sufficient attention to developing the limited graphological literacy skills of immigrant ESL students. Most textbooks for such students focus more on writing disparate sentences than on providing models and experience in writing paragraphs of text.

Teacher-generated materials, on the other hand, can be adapted to meet the specific needs of a group of students better than standard textbooks, which may actually cost more. However teacher-generated materials require duplicating resources which are not always available. Furthermore any teacher who deviates from the textbook and/or creates her own materials must have greater L2 oral communicative competence and literacy than someone who simply follows what is in the book. Finally an insufficient understanding of underlying principles (such as Freire's *conscientização*,) has led to the development of materials which have been reproduced and used as the primers of old and do not reflect the innovations upon which they are theoretically based (Archer and Cottingham 1996: 10-13).

Therefore when facing the *strategic dilemma* of what materials to use, ideally I see the worth of teachers' developing their own materials — and the teacher-generated lessons discussed in this study give evidence of their effectiveness. However, to make the pedagogic recommendation to utilize teacher-generated materials assumes the teacher has sufficient literacy in the target language, sufficient knowledge to develop materials, and sufficient duplicating resources to make this possible. Thus while recommendations can be made on the basis of the research project, *dilemmas of strategy* regarding the implementation of the approach in other settings remain. And finally, pedagogic recommendations about ways to resolve *dilemmas of purpose* and *strategy* are incomplete without a consideration of *dilemmas over results*.

Dilemmas over results occur when there is lack of agreement as to the desirable outcomes of the educational program and how these might best be measured. As long as there are value conflicts as to the *purposes* and *strategies* of literacy instruction, there will be similar controversies over *results*. Pedagogic recommendations for adult ESL literacy instruction must take these factors into account.

Dilemmas over results often occur in adult education ESL literacy programs because of the different perceived uses and needs for evaluation (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992). Continued funding and support for an adult education ESL literacy program are often dependent upon proof of its validity and efficacy. Most highly technological and literate societies advocate and even mandate schooling for children and opportunities for higher education at universities. Consequently financial support for such programs is virtually assured although the level of funding required may be debated. In contrast adult education ESL literacy programs are often outside the academic mainstream because most of these programs have no educational prerequisites, required attendance policies, or final examinations. The continued support of these somewhat marginalized programs is dependent upon proof of their efficacy. Program accountability methods may include summative evaluation through use of standardized testing, qualitative formative and summative evaluations, as well as analysis of retention and attrition rates.

Summative evaluation procedures are often favored by administrators to determine accountability, to establish norms, and to maintain standards (Rea-Dickins and Germaine 1992). When evaluation is done primarily for administrative purposes, test results which

can be expressed quantitatively are favored. Often standardized tests with discrete test items that can be scored objectively are used so that results can be expressed quantitatively.

Dilemmas over results may occur when such standardized tests are used to evaluate adult education ESL literacy programs. First of all, an inherent problem exists in utilizing summative quantitative evaluation in adult education open-entry open-exit programs because fluctuating attendance means that not all students have been present for the whole course and consequently everyone cannot be held responsible for all the material covered (Chapter 6). Second, if funding is tied to measurable success a teacher may decide or be told to make sure students master material which will occur on the test.⁴ Third, students can be taught how to utilize strategic guessing on standardized multiple choice tests to improve final scores, particularly if incorrect answers are not penalized. Fourth, incorrect answers may indicate what a student did not know, but do not indicate why. Finally, standardized quantitative test questions are limited to topics to which short answers can be given and their successful completion provides little information about the learning process or whether students can actually complete literacy tasks, particularly those which require writing text (Walsh 1996).

Therefore the usefulness of summative standardized qualitative testing can be questioned not only for validity, but also from a pedagogical perspective:

Clearly, accountability should not be limited uniquely to the administrative needs of the policy makers but should be focused as well on how much learners learn from the services provided. Such broader measures of accountability can also provide the kind of information critical to obtaining political support for a continuation of funding in future years. (Wagner 1992: 25)

The usefulness of ongoing qualitative evaluation to enhance the process of teaching and learning has been demonstrated in the research project. While qualitative evaluation contains a subjective element, appropriate and clearly defined assessment criteria can assist a teacher in making reliable formative and summative qualitative evaluations. This research has shown that student portfolios not only provide a means of documenting student work, but also as a way of maintaining an overview of each individual student's progress and any specific difficulties he has in learning how to complete literacy tasks involving reading and writing text. Therefore from a pedagogic perspective, if the aim of evaluation is to improve the program, formative and summative evaluation expressed in qualitative terms can be more valuable than quantitative test results in determining course efficacy.

A final type of data which can be used to evaluate the results of an adult education ESL literacy program is retention rates, particularly if continued attendance is considered indicative of a strong program. Students usually keep attending a program if they want to learn to read and write, have sufficient self-confidence to come, and are learning useful skills and/or information. Students may, of course, also attend for social reasons, such as the opportunity to meet other people.

Attrition rates are often considered indicative of a weak program, but without individual interviews the reasons why students stopped attending will remain unknown. Adult students may think the course is poorly or inappropriately taught. They may not find the subject matter and/or materials to be pertinent or of interest. They may find the methodology inappropriate for adult learners. Or they may think they already have mastered the material being covered.

On the other hand, attrition rates are not necessarily an indication of a poorly taught course. Students may (think) they have mastered the material and have moved to an advanced class or may feel overwhelmed and have moved to a beginning class. Students may have developed sufficient literacy skills to continue learning on their own in a print-rich environment. Students may no longer attend class at present because of family and/or work responsibilities, but they may have developed sufficient self-confidence and interest to come back later. From a perspective of family literacy, students may have learned enough about the educational system to understand their children's schooling better, to be more able to help with homework, and to become more involved in their children's education. Therefore, although retention and/or attrition rates may be seen as indicators of the efficacy of a program, quantitative analysis of attendance rates alone without understanding of the reasons for variations in attendance provides an insufficient basis for evaluating a program.

While quantitative and qualitative evaluation as well as retention rates may all supply different types of information which can be utilized for purposes of program analysis, even more illusive factors have to do with the affective domain:

... some of the most powerful influences of schooling have to do with the attitudes and behavior associated with the schooling process rather than with the skills acquired as a result of the curriculum. (Heyneman 1992: 31)

Therefore, although the research project presented an innovative approach to ESL literacy instruction which was documented and validated through portfolio analysis, *dilemmas over results* remain about how to assess the effects of this or any adult education ESL literacy course.

Additional pedagogic recommendations may result from further enquiry into literacy acquisition, instruction, and retention including long term effects of learning to read and write. Areas for further research or *research dilemmas* can be considered from the perspectives of student as learner, parent, employee, and member of society.

8.5. Areas for future research — *research dilemmas*

The approach taken in this thesis has been shown to be sound in principle and workable in practice. However, the teacher/research project raised a number of important issues for further consideration which will be grouped under *student as learner*, *student as family member*, *student as member of the work force*, and *student as member of society*.

The student as learner:

Much work has been done on second language acquisition, but further research is needed into the various factors which influence the learning curves of adult education ESL students.

- Family socioeconomic status, or SES, is considered to be a powerful factor in learning curves (Coleman 1966, Kirsch et al. 1992). What is the influence of parents' occupation, disposable income, and years of education upon student's L1/L2 literacy acquisition, educational success, and subsequent economic opportunity?
- Are L1 formal education and literacy stronger indicators of how quickly a student will develop L2 literacy than L2 oral communicative competence?
- What are the relationships between past education in L1 and L2, an understanding of the academic environment, and self-confidence in one's ability to succeed?
- What role do the acquisition of specific study skills and the ability to use organizational aids such as notebooks play?
- Do students who develop strong L2 oral communicative competence before L2 literacy have greater auditory or sound-related aptitudes such as tonal memory, pitch discrimination, and rhythm memory than the general population (Johnson O'Connor 1989)? If so, how can these aptitudes be utilized more effectively in the acquisition of L2 literacy?
- How can students be motivated and helped to read for pleasure and to practice their literacy skills outside the classroom context?
- While longitudinal studies are difficult with more mobile populations, how could the effectiveness of literacy programs be evaluated not only with respect to the individual's immediate literacy uses and gains but also over the long term in terms of his interaction with others in the family, the work place, and the community?

The student as family member:

Increased interest and research into family literacy (Auerbach 1995) suggests that the impact of gains made by a limited ESL literacy student also need to be considered in terms of family literacy.

- If adult education ESL students attend classes in the local public schools and become more literate, how can they utilize this knowledge to help their children to grow up in more literate and educated surroundings than they themselves experienced?
- If parental literacy is a strong predictor of a child's educational success and subsequent economic opportunity (Janes 1995), what is the impact of immigrant parents' acquiring ESL literacy upon their child's school performance?
- If adult ESL students attend adult education classes, what understanding do they gain of the American educational system their children encounter?

- What impact does parents' increased understanding of the American educational setting have upon their willingness to get involved in their children's schooling and to help them further their education?
- Does parents' ESL class attendance influence their children's perception of the importance of learning for everyone in the family?
- What is the impact of adult education ESL literacy instruction upon a parent's ability and interest in helping with school-based literacy tasks such as reading to children and helping with homework?
- Since women world-wide tend to have lower literacy rates than men and are underrepresented in literacy classes (Stromquist 1992), to what extent would providing child care increase the enrollment of women in ESL classes?
- The underrepresentation of pupils of Hispanic origin in local school programs for gifted and talented students is just one indication that the children of those immigrants are not performing academically as well as they might (Cooksy 1996). Would tutoring for school age children while adult education afternoon or evening classes were held not only help the pupils but increase adult attendance?
- If parents and children are at similar ESL literacy levels, would classes for parents and children promote intergenerational learning?
- If children have greater L2 literacy than their parents, could pupils encourage their parents to attend adult education ESL instruction and develop ESL literacy?

The student as member of the work force:

Strong correlations have been found between formal education, literacy levels, and employment among native born Americans (Kirsch et al. 1993) and throughout the world (Galbraith 1994: 180-84). Further research could be done into how to maximize the effectiveness of literacy training for employment purposes.

- How has increased L2 literacy affected local students' employment opportunities in terms of job responsibility, salary, and/or advancement?
- Employment portfolios which include résumés as well as information about students' literacy and work skills have been successfully utilized to increase employment opportunities for NS Americans with limited literacy (Blake-Stalker 1996). How could a program be developed which would include adult education ESL literacy instruction and portfolio development?

The student as a member of society:

In multicultural societies there is ongoing debate about the amount of assimilation that is possible and/or desirable and about the ways in which both documented and undocumented immigrants might best be empowered within the culture. The implicit or explicit mandate of assimilation into the L2 culture may be stronger or weaker, depending

upon the country of origin and the host country, but a concept similar to *Americanization* is sure to exist.

- How do factors such as age, gender, immigration status, socio-economic and/or cultural status, education, and religion affect what the desired form of assimilation? How much instructional emphasis should be placed upon the attainment of assimilation?
- Fundamental to any educational endeavor is also the belief in empowerment through knowledge. How do factors such as age, gender, immigration status, socio-economic and/or cultural status, education, and religion affect what the desired form of empowerment is? How much instructional emphasis should be placed upon the attainment of empowerment?
- What kind of balance should be established between assimilation and empowerment?
- To what extent does incorporating American history and civics into the adult education ESL curriculum help prepare students to become members of a participatory democracy?
- To what extent can governmentally funded programs incorporate action for social change into the adult education ESL curriculum?

In conclusion, this discussion of *research dilemmas* indicates that adult ESL literacy has yet to be examined from a number of perspectives. Ideally any such research should have a sound theoretical basis and be useful and applicable to real-world contexts (Kamil 1995).

8.6. End note

The growing importance of adult literacy programs has led to increased interest in linking research, policy formulation, and practice. This project suggests that teacher/researcher projects can provide a basis for raising awareness of theoretical issues in a systematic and principled way. If teachers and teacher trainers come to understand the dialectical relationship between theory and practice, theory will gain more relevance and provide a basis for analyzing what is done in the classroom. Such awareness would move the focus from a consideration of *what* and *how* to a consideration of *why* something should be done and *how* this interrelates with other educational objectives.

As an ESL teacher/researcher, in the course of this study I gained a greater understanding of literacy from a theoretical perspective. I also had the opportunity to develop procedures that would enable me to actualize that knowledge effectively. Proposals for literacy instruction ranging from general curriculum change to classroom technique are essentially meaningless unless teachers have a theoretical understanding of what they are attempting to realize in practice and unless they can evaluate practice with reference to theory. My teaching evolved into a more self-conscious, inquiring enterprise when

classroom activities were referred to theoretical principles. Ultimately, I hope all of this has been of benefit to my students whose motivation to learn has been a continual source of inspiration to me.

The most valuable thing I learned in this class is how to read and how to write.

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- 1 For example, asking students to 'Guess again' if they called out the wrong letter, voting if two letters were chosen, or intentionally writing the wrong letter of two called out, helped students understand the advantages of participating in the process of learning to spell even if they made occasional errors.
 - 2 TESOL in 1992, 1994, and 1995, CATESOL (California TESOL) in 1996, and the Philadelphia World Conference on Literacy in 1996.
 - 3 Educational value systems embodying constellations of socio-political and philosophical beliefs can be described in different ways. For example, the conceptual framework of Clark (1987) distinguishes between Classical humanism, reconstructionism, and progressivism. However these terms are more appropriate for foreign language teaching in the settings he describes and less frequently used with reference to American adult ESL literacy where different issues are involved.
 - 4 For example, the test mandated by the State of California for all agencies receiving adult basic education funding has questions about a variety of life skills literacy tasks. If the teacher purposely does lessons to cover commonly occurring topics such as prescription bottle labels, student test scores will improve. The ability to answer such discrete test questions does not always correlate directly with a student's ability to complete literacy tasks in daily life.

Appendix

Appendix 2.1: Computer Analysis of Phoneme-Grapheme Correspondences

This selection of the results of the phoneme-grapheme correspondences utilizing standard American pronunciation plotted by Hanna et al. It illustrates the way in which some of these relationships are highly regular, although some phonemes could be written in a few different ways (1971: 214). The terms, short and long vowel sounds, are those used in the original.

SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS:			
Sound:	Spelling:	Example:	Percent:
Short a	a	cat	100%
Short e	e	set	93%
		dealt	4%
Short i	i	bid	73%
Short o	o	hot	95%
		wash	5%
Short u	u	cut	88%
		son	10%

LONG VOWEL SOUNDS:			
Sound:	Spelling:	Example:	Percent:
Long a	a - e	late	80%
	ai	sail	9%
	ay	say	6%
Long e	e	me	72%
	ee	see	10%
	ea	meat	10%
Long i	i - e	side	74%
	y	my	14%
	igh	high	6%
Long o	o - e	hope	87%
	oa	boat	5%
	ow	low	5%
Long u	u - e	tune	90%
	ew	few	3%

A comparison of three different ways to denote standard American pronunciation is given on the following chart from the American Heritage Dictionary (1975: L):

AHD = American Heritage Dictionary pronunciation key
IPA = International Phonetic Alphabet
T-S = System of phonemes described by George Trager and Henry Lee Smith

spellings	AHD	IPA	T-S
pat	ă	æ	æ
pay	â	e	ey
care	*âr	er, er	chr, eyr, er
father	ä	ɑ:, ɑ	ah
bib	b	b	b
church	ch	tʃ	č
deed, milled	d	d	d
pet	ě	ɛ	e
bee	ē	i	iy
fife, phase, rough	f	f	f
gag	g	g	g
hat	h	h	h
which	hw	hw (also ʍ)	hw
pit	*ĭ	ɪ	i
pie, by	i	aɪ	ay
pier	*ĭr	ɪr, ɪr	ihr, iyr, ir
judge	j	dʒ	j
kick, cat, pique	k	k	k
lid, needle	*l (nēd'ɫ)	l, ɫ [ˈnɪdɫ]	l (not syllabic)
mum	m	m	m
no, sudden	*n (sūd'n)	n, ɲ [ˈsʌdɲ]	n (not syllabic)
thing	ng	ŋ	ŋ
pot, *horrid	ō	ɑ	a, o
toe, *hoarse	ō	o	ow
caught, paw, *for	ô	ɔ	oh, oh, ɔ
noise	oi	ɔɪ	oy
took	ōō	u	u
boot	ōō	u	uw
out	ou	au	aw, æw
pop	p	p	p
roar	*r	r	r
sauce	s	s	s

spellings	AHD	IPA	T-S
ship, dish	sh	ʃ	š
tight, stopped	t	t	t
thin	th	θ	θ
this	th	ð	ð
cut	ŭ	ʌ	ə
urge, term, firm, word, heard	*ûr	ʊ, ʊr	ər, əhr
valve	v	v	v
with	w	w	w
yes	y	j	y
zebra, xylem	z	z	z
vision, pleasure, garage	zh	ʒ	ž
about, item, edible, *ə		ə	ə, ð
gallop, circus			
butter	ər	ə	ər

	AHD	IPA
French ami	â	a
French feu,	œ	œ
German schön	ü	y
French tu,		
German über		
German ich,	KH	x
Scottish loch		
French bon	N	õ, æ, â, œ
French compiegne	y' (kôN-pyě'n'y')	ɲ

	STRESS
Primary stress	' bi-ol'o-gy (bī-ôl'ə-jē)
Secondary stress	' bi'o-log'i-cal (bī'ə-lŏj'ī-kəl)

Appendix 2.2: Contrastive Analysis of Consonants and Vowels in Spanish and English

There is a fairly close correspondance between the pronunciation and the written form of Spanish and English consonants. Among the consonants that are not silent, the ones which cause difficulty for the Mexican ESL student are:

- b* and *v*: In Spanish there is no difference in sound between these two letters, so the sound of the English *v* has to be learned (and not as related to *b*, but as a voiced *f*). Once a student can pronounce these two English phonemes correctly, proper spelling will follow.
- d*: The Spanish *d* at the beginning of an utterance or after *l* or *n* sounds similar to the English *d* in *date*, but in all other positions it is similar to the English *th* in *they*.
- g*: The Spanish *g* when followed by *a*, *o*, and *u* has a sound like the sound in the English *go*, except when it comes before *e* or *i*, for then it sounds similar to the English *h* in *home*, although with more friction.
- h*: The Spanish *h* is always silent.
- j*: The Spanish *j* is always like the English *h* in *home*, although pronounced with more friction.
- ll*: This letter of the Spanish alphabet (but not in English) is similar to *y* in *yet*. As indicated in the introduction, if a person does not have and/or cannot hear the difference in his dialect, he will make errors in writing these sounds in Spanish and may also try to use *ll* in place of a *y* in English.
- ñ*: The Spanish *ñ* is heard in English words adopted from Spanish such as *canyon*.
- r*: The Spanish *r* has a somewhat different sound that causes some pronunciation problems; the same holds for the Spanish *rr* trill, but this does not cause transfer difficulty in writing.
- x*: The Spanish *x* before a consonant sounds like the English *s*. When *x* occurs between vowels in the older spelling some names like *México*, it sounds like the English *h* in *home*.

Of this list, the most problematic consonant for the Mexicans is the English *v*. The rest cause occasional, but not major difficulties.

Vowels are another matter. First of all, in Spanish there is a strong phoneme-grapheme relationship, but a direct transfer to English of the Spanish grapheme-phoneme relationship will not work. Rather than the linguistic transcription of vowel sounds, utilizing the instructional technique of referring to vowel sounds as being *long* or *short*, the following generalizations can be made:

- a* The Spanish *a* as in *casa* has a sound similar to English *a* in *father*. (But the most common English sounds are the *Short A* as in *apple* and the *Long A* in *cake* or *rain*.)

- e The Spanish *e* in *este* or the *ey* in *rey* is pronounced almost like a *Long A* as in *cake*, rather than the much more common *Short E* in *elephant* and the *Long E* in *keep* or *cream*.
- i The Spanish *i* is pronounced like the English *Long E* in *keep* or *cream*, but never like the *Short I* in *Indian* or the *Long I* in *ice*.
- o The Spanish *o* is similar to the English *A W* as in *law*. It is never like the *Short O* in *pot*.
- u The Spanish *u* is similar to the English *Long U* in *rule*, but never like the *Short U* in *cut*.
- y The Spanish *y* (as well as the consonant pair *ll*) are similar to the English *y* in *yet*. But it never sounds like the *y* in *baby* or *cry*. In the diphthongs *oy* (*estoy*) sounds like *toy*, and *¡ay, ay, ay!* sounds like *eye*.

The Mexican ESL student faces two problems with regard to English vowels. First of all, the written form he associates with vowel sounds is usually not the same in English and Spanish. Second, although in Spanish vowels letters consistently have only one sound, the student must learn that in English vowels letters have more than one sound and may be written in more than one way. Although in all languages people can make discrete sounds, how these are represented in written form varies. ESL learners must understand these differences when they try to transfer knowledge of phoneme-grapheme relationships from L1 to L2. If short vowel sounds are taught in correlation with key words that can be easily pictured such as *apple*, *elephant*, *Indian*, *octopus*, *umbrella* and if long vowel sounds are taught in correlation with the sound of that letter in the alphabet, students have a fixed word to refer to when trying to make phoneme-grapheme relationships in English. (For further explanation see also Chapter 2, end note 2.)

Appendix 2.2: Spelling Chart

SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS (usually 1 vowel letter)		LONG VOWEL SOUNDS (usually 2 vowel letters)				
A (<i>apple</i>) cat snatch have pan badge plaid sat paddle laugh	Exceptions again any said many says friend	a - e made make name	ai maid pail Spain	ay may pay away	Exceptions break eight great neighbor steak weigh veil vein reign matinee they	
	E (<i>elephant</i>) bed dredge dead men peddle bread sell bedding dread	Exceptions again any said many says friend	e - e gene Pete these	ea cream leave meal	ey key valley volley	Exceptions people pizza police amoeba debris suite
I (<i>Indian</i>) it skinny been sit fiddle women dish bidding pretty	Exceptions give build live guilt sieve guilty	i - e bite type hide rhyme time thyme	igh(t) high light night	ind find kinder mindless	Exceptions eye aisle buy isle aye island guide height feisty	
	O (<i>octopus</i>) top clock swan box locking want dock coddle squat	Exceptions swap father watchfacade what mirage	o - e bone stove rose	ow blow glow know	olt colt bolt revolt	Exceptions mauve oh plateau comb sew depot mould thorough soul shoulder
U (<i>umbrella</i>) cup strung was but dusty does tug cuddle come	Exceptions son dove won glove tongue love some month hover	u - e cube June rule	ui(e) fruit suit juice		Exceptions few beauty grew feud new neuter pewter queue move prove improve remove tomb womb two	
	Short OO book foot look goodly wool wooden	Exceptions could wolf should wolves would	oo - e goose loose moose		Exceptions do, to lose who whose shoe soup souvenir through youth	
AW a w au awe autumn draw Paul saw cause	Exceptions ought thought bought brought fought	Diphthong OI oi oi - e oy boil choice boy join noise toy moist voice destroy		Diphthong OU,OW ou ou cloud round mouth		

SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS AFFECTED BY R (usually 1 vowel letter)		LONG VOWEL SOUNDS AFFECTED BY R (usually 2 vowel letters)	
Short A <i>ar</i> car star <i>far</i> far start <i>cigar</i> cigar army	arr carry marry narrow	are bare mare aware	Exceptions are heart bazaar bizarre
	Exceptions are heart bazaar bizarre	air air fair pair	Exceptions bear pear wear there where their
Short E <i>er</i> mer error terrible	err merry error terrible	ere here mere sincere	Exceptions er beer deer leery
	Exceptions bury	ear ear dear weary	Exceptions weir weird bier cashier fierce pierce
Short I <i>ir</i> miracle lyrical satirical vinile	irr mirror Phyrrie	ire fire tire entire	Exceptions yre lyre pyre Tyre
			Exceptions choir
Short O <i>or</i> forest corn fort	orr borrow horror porridge	ore more horse store	Exceptions oar oar boar soar
	borrow morrow tomorrow sorrow	oor poor spoor mooring	Long OO ou tour your you're
Short U <i>ur</i> fur her were hurt	Unstressed summer winter winner	ure cure pure sure	Exceptions urr furry hurry burrow
	earth hearse learn	curious purify purity	

Appendix 2.4: Spanish-English Cognates

Most English words with Latinate roots have Spanish cognates. There are cognates with direct transfer which have identical spellings. Cognates with indirect transfer have a slightly modified orthography but the same meaning. Finally there are a limited number of false cognates (Chaillé 1982: 55-63).

Direct cognates present no spelling difficulties, but students must learn how to pronounce these words correctly. Direct cognates (which need the occasional double consonant) include such words as *actor*, *animal*, *atlas*, *capital*, *central*, and *posible* > *possible*.

Cognates of indirect transfer have slightly different spellings in Spanish and English. However, many follow regular conversion rules involving the initial and final sound in nouns and adjectives, suffixes, and infinitival endings. Consistent consonant changes may occur (*filosofía* > *philosophy*, *autor* > *author*). Initial or final vowels can be dropped (*especial* > *special*, *liquido* > *liquid*) or final vowels can change to -e (*caso* > *case*). Many suffixes have different forms (*economía* > *economy*, *nación* > *nation*, *correctamente* > *correctly*). And infinitival endings are dropped (*defender* > *defend*, *insistir* > *insist*).

False cognates also exist, which orthographically look like cognates although spelling variations may occur. However, the disparate meanings have to be learned to prevent misunderstandings both in written and spoken language. These include such words as:

<i>Spanish word:</i>	<i>English meaning:</i>	<i>False association:</i>
asistir	to attend	to assist
embarazada	pregnant	embarrassed
pariente	relative	parent

There are hundreds of Spanish-English cognates. Even low literacy Mexicans can spell the Spanish words due to the close phoneme-grapheme relationship in that language. Therefore an understanding of the patterns indicated in the lists above can definitely assist the Mexican student in attaining ESL literacy.

Appendix 2.5: Halliday's categories of English punctuation
(Halliday 1985: 35)

Type	Feature represented		Symbol	
	general	specific	name	form
Boundary markers	grammatical units	word	space	(#)
		phrase; weaker clause	comma	,
		clause	closing	semicolon
			opening	colon
		sentence	full stop	.
Status markers	speech function	information exchange	statement	
			question	question mark
		other functions	command, offer, suggestion, exclamation, call, greeting	exclamation mark
	projection	quotation, citation	first order; or meaning	single quote
			second order; or wording	double quote
Relation markers	any unit	apposition		dash
		digression		parenthesis
	(compound) word	linkage		hyphen
	possessive, negative	omission		apostrophe

Appendix 2.6: Teacher's Spelling Test

Imagine you are teaching a class of adult immigrant ESL students who have adequate verbal communicative competence but low L1 and L2 literacy. Can you explain in **SIMPLE ENGLISH** why the following words are grouped and spelled the way they are. Look at each list and give the generalization that applies to most of the words. If there are exceptions, try to explain why.

1. a. cat b. cup c. lip d. pet e. pot

Generalization: The short vowel sounds can be remembered by learning a key word for each one such as *a = apple, e = elephant, I = Indian, o = octopus, and u = umbrella.*

Principle: In one-syllable words with a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern, the vowel letter has a short sound.

Exceptions: None.

2. a. putting b. honking c. slapping d. quitting e. fixing f. mending

Generalization: 1, 2, 3 + -ing: (Start counting at the first vowel letter: if you get to 3 before the end of the word, do not add another letter. If you only get to 2, double the last letter to make 3.)

Principle: In order to preserve the short vowel sound in words with only one vowel letter, the vowel letter must be followed by two consonants. Therefore, if there is only one consonant following the vowel letter, the consonant must be doubled.

Exceptions:

- * *honking, mending:* These words have 2 consonants already.
- * *fixing:* *W, x, and y* are never doubled.
- * *quitting:* *Q* and *u* are in love. (Principle: *qu* always appear together; so although there are two vowel letters, the *i* has a short vowel sound.)

3. a. hot > hotter > hottest b. fast > faster > fastest
c. bad > worse > worst d. happy > happier > happiest

Generalization: 1, 2, 3 +-er or -est.

Principle: With the comparative and superlative of one syllable adjectives add -er or -est to the word, doubling the final consonant if necessary as explained in #2.

Exceptions:

- * With two syllable adjectives ending in -y, change the y to *i* and add -er or -est.
- * *Bad* and *good* are the two irregular adjectives in English and their comparative and superlative forms are *worse > worst* and *better > best*.

4. a. make b. Pete c. kite d. rope e. cute

Generalization: *E* at the end and of the word and the vowel (letter) says its name (i.e. the name of the vowel letter in the alphabet).

Principle: If a one syllable word ends in *e*, the preceding vowel letter has a long sound.

Exception: None.

5. a. green b. soap c. great d. neighbor e. belief f. clean
g. rain h. right i. receipt

Generalization: When two vowels (letters) go walking, the first one does the talking.

Principle: When two vowels letters appear together, the first vowel letter has a long vowel sound and the second is silent.

Exceptions:

- * *great*: In this case the second vowel letter has the long sound as in *break*.
- * *belief, receipt, neighbor*:: *I* before *e* except after *c*, or when sounded like *a* in *neighbor* and *weigh*.
- * *right*: *I* + *ght* gives the long *i* sound as in *bright, fight, might*.

6. a. baked b. baker c. baking d. nicer e. nicest f. faster

Generalization: Drop the *-e* and add *-ing* (or *-ed*, *-er*, *-est*).

Principle: When adding a suffix onto a word that ends in *e*, you drop the *e* and add *-ed*, *-er*, *-est*, *-ing*.

Exception: If the word does not end in *-e*, simply add the endings.

Appendix 5.1: Comparison of Adult Education and Community College ESL in Santa Barbara, California

This comparison is based upon figures for the 1992-3 academic year.

	SANTA BARBARA ADULT EDUCATION ESL [adult ed]	SANTA BARBARA COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL [SBCC]
<u>Student population:</u>		
Number of students	1700	950
Ethnicity	95% Latino, 5% European & Asian	85% Latino, 10% European, 5% Asian
Previous education	Mostly 0-10 years	Mostly 11+ years
Transfer from adult ed. to SBCC	Unknown, probably 5-10%	
Transfer from SBCC ESL to vocational programs		Unknowns, probably less than 5%
Transfer from SBCC to 4 year universities		Unknown, probably less than 1%
<u>Attendance patterns</u>		
Getting to class on time	Not required	Required
Regular attendance	Not required	Required
<u>Curriculum</u>		
Designer	Teacher	Department
Textbooks	No required text	Required text
Syllabus design	Open-entry open-exit	Traditional linear syllabus possible
Emphasis	Life skills & appropriate competence in the 4 skill areas: no emphasis on future academic training	Academic English oral communicative competence & literacy as needed to progress through vocational or academic program
<u>Evaluation</u>		
Homework	Up to discretion of teacher	Required
Tests	Up to discretion of teacher	Required
Grades	None given	Grades given
Final evaluation	Teacher & student together decide when student should move up	Grade determines advancement
<u>Teachers</u>		
Qualifications	ESL certificate	MA in ESL or related field
Teaching experience	Often former primary school teachers	Often no previous teaching experience or if so in ESL
Type of employment	All part-time	Full-time & part-time
Full time pay		\$27,000 - \$55,000
Part-time	\$29 - \$35 per hour	\$32 - \$39 per hour
Benefits		
Part-time	None	None
Full-time		Medical, retirement, tenure possible after 3 years
<u>Program funding</u>		
Total budget of \$37,630,431 for both programs		
<u>State funding:</u> based on average daily attendance [ADA]	ADA funding: \$2,994,391	ADA funding: \$23,189,809
<u>Local property tax:</u>	\$2,168,275 divided between both programs	

Appendix 6.1: Spelling Instruction

The value of incorporating phonics into literacy instruction was discussed in Chapter 2. If the teacher has a command of the common patterns of English spelling, phonics can be incorporated as needed throughout instruction. Spelling can be addressed in relationship to content work such as writing out words which come up in a pre-writing discussion and which the students will subsequently need in their own writing. By using an overhead projector or a blackboard, words used in the course of discussion can be written for all to see, often by asking the students to spell the words in unison. If two letters are called out in the place of one, this provides an opportunity to discuss which one is correct. Occasionally the spelling of one word can be followed by a discussion of other words with a similar spelling or a discussion of how one phoneme can be spelled in more than one way. This can also be used as a means of vocabulary development. Spelling instruction can become a meaningful activity rather than *drill and kill* exercise done in isolation from actual language use.

In English and Spanish most consonant sounds are written using the same alphabet letters. Therefore emphasis is put upon the basic phonics generalizations governing long and short vowel sounds, as well as spelling changes required by the addition of suffixes onto nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Particularly with limited literacy ESL students, it is important to simplify how to spell in whatever way possible (Appendix 2.6). While such simplification may be taken by some to be unacademic, many native English speakers, when asked, will confess that they say '*I before E except after C*' to themselves before writing a word in which the phonics generalization is applicable.

Short vowel sounds are almost always written with only one vowel letter and can be related to the words (and drawings by the teacher) of *apple, elephant, Indian, octopus, umbrella*. Long vowels sounds are usually written with two alphabet letters and are governed either by *E at the end and the vowel says its name* or *When 2 vowels go walking the first one does the talking*.

When to double final consonants before adding suffixes is problematic at the intermediate level, particularly due to the mispronunciation of vowel sounds by many Latinos, who consequently have no clear conception of long and short vowels sounds or how they are written in English. An example of a simple, but useful spelling generalization which works most of the time regarding the doubling of a final consonant of an accented final syllable is *uno, dos, tres* or in English *1, 2, 3, -ing*, which means start counting at the first vowel letter of the last syllable. If you get to the end of the word before you get to 3, double the final consonant:

sto ₍₁₎ p ₍₂₎ p ₍₃₎	—>	stopping
ho ₍₁₎ n ₍₂₎ k ₍₃₎	—>	honking
ste ₍₁₎ e ₍₂₎ r ₍₃₎	—>	steering

Exceptions:

1. No double *W*, *X*, or *Y* (growing, fixing, flying)
2. *Q* and *U* are in love (qu i₍₁₎t₍₂₎t₍₃₎ —> quitting)
3. This does not work if a final syllable with a short vowel sound is not accented (as in de-vel'op-ing), but most of the words used by these students do not have polysyllabic roots)

The chart giving basic phonics generalizations is given to the student on the first day of attendance and is referred to often during instruction. The main vehicle for teaching spelling words is weekly tests on the 98 most common irregular verbs. Weekly multi-level verb tests (Appendix 6.3) have been devised to challenge students with different levels of literacy and can be appropriate for both old and new students. Students are responsible each week for three new verbs. Each week a test is given on all of the verbs studied thus far — a means of recycling and reviewing. A new student or a very limited literacy student may first just copy from his verb list and concentrate on the present (adding *-s* or *-es*) and writing the present continuous (making the necessary changes in the stem, such as doubling the final consonant before adding the suffix *-ing*). Students then go on to work on the simple past and finally on the present perfect. In an open-entry open-exit class emphasis is upon individual growth rather than judging all students in accordance with a pre-established norm. Students try on each verb test to improve upon their previous performance rather than simply trying for a perfect paper. Therefore if Miguel missed twenty last week and misses fifteen this week, he has improved, whereas if Luis missed two last week and misses four this week, he needs to study more and has no reason to value his performance over that of Miguel.

Every student is also given a small teacher-made English-Spanish Spanish-English dictionary. Because of limited literacy (in some cases a student does not even know the sequence of the letters of the alphabet), such dictionaries have limited usefulness. While the goal is to teach each student the rudiments of spelling, in writing assignments the expression of ideas on paper should not be impeded by poor spelling skills. Consequently students are encouraged to help each other. The teacher circulates to help students sound out the spelling of any word they want. Spelling obviously emphasizes conformity to the norm established by the compilers of American dictionaries and any deviation is considered misspelling. Here again students become empowered by mastering American spelling.

Appendix 6.2: Grammar Components of Syllabus

The grammar focus in intermediate adult education ESL instruction is upon verbs, the use of the definite and indefinite article, adjectives, and prepositions.

Verb tenses are studied, for many intermediate ESL students have learned to use the English present tense at work and then come to use that to the exclusion of all other tenses. The syllabus includes the present, present continuous, simple past, present perfect and future plus irregular verb forms, as has been mentioned with reference to spelling. Points of grammar are related to content-based lessons, so that a consideration of when to use the present tense could be introduced by examining the spelling changes needed in the third person singular. Then in a writing assignment on a topic, such as My Day, the student would write about what he does at work day after day in the present test. In this way grammar and spelling can be advantageously related to writing assignments on a topic in which the student is both knowledgeable and emotionally involved (Elbow 1981, Britton 1982, Cook-Gumperz and Keller-Cohen 1993). Interrogative sentences and negation in single word verb tenses involving the use of *do* or *did* with changes in word order are also studied at this level. For example, if students often incorrectly form interrogative sentences, following a reading in a content-based lesson on discrimination, an activity could include asking a partner a variety of teacher-generated written questions about discrimination. This exercise would give practice in reading correctly-formed interrogative sentences to be followed by the student's writing a few questions of his own.

The use of articles in English is difficult for Mexicans because Spanish follows different rules. Therefore the use of the definite and indefinite articles, as well as when to omit them, needs attention. Problems also arise with the use or omission of personal pronouns. Whereas in Spanish one would say 'Soy maestra', in English one would say, 'I am a teacher.' A lesson on jobs at the beginning of a term might include students' learning the names and occupations of everyone in the class. If the first person says only his name and occupation, but following students must tell about all the students who have spoken so far, this provides an excellent way to learn that in English the personal pronoun must always be expressed and that the definite article must be written before giving one's occupation. This game also helps develop useful vocabulary. If the teacher writes the jobs on the board, students also learn how to spell a number of words.

Adjectives are a problem because in Spanish they usually follow rather than precede the noun. In addition many students make the fossilized error of always forming the comparative with *more* and the superlative with *most* (*more good, most good*), a principle which in English only works with polysyllabic adjectives that do not end with *y*. A study of the spelling changes occurring in the comparative and superlative forms provides opportunities to study what modifications in spelling are necessary when suffixes are added to any word.

Prepositions in English are always problematic and must be studied again and again. The triad *at*, *on*, *in* receives special attention at this level.

All of such grammar topics involve medium problems which, if unresolved, hamper effective communication. In this sense grammar or the systemic knowledge of the language system is not considered to be a valuable area for instruction in and of itself, but rather is included in the syllabus in order to make the mediation of meaning more effective.

Appendix 6.3: Irregular Verb Test

VERB TEST

- 2

Name Amal
Date October 19-1993

Infinitive	Present	Present Continuous	Simple Past	Present Perfect
to drink	he drinks	he is drinking	he drank	he has drunk
to catch	he catches	he is catching	he caught	he has caught
to break	he breaks	he is breaking	he broke	he has broken
to beat	he beats	he is beating	he beat	he has beaten
to be	I am	he is	he was	he has been
to come	he comes	he is coming	he came	he has come
to deal	he deals	he is dealing	he dealt	he has dealt
to cut	he cuts	he is cutting	he cut	he has cut
to bite	he bites	he is biting	he bit	he has bitten
to become	he becomes	he is becoming	he became	he has become
to choose	he chooses	he is choosing	he chose	he has chosen
to build	he builds	he is building	he built	he has built
to cost	he costs	he is costing	he cost	he has cost
to bet	he bets	he is betting	he bet	he has bet
to buy	he buys	he is buying	he bought	he has bought

Appendix 7.1:

Adult Education ESL Written English Class Placement Test

1. What is your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. How long have you been in the United States?
4. Where do you live?
5. What is your work?
6. What do you usually eat for breakfast?
7. What did you do yesterday?
8. What are you going to do tomorrow?
9. What are you going to do on the weekend?
10. Why are you studying English?

Appendix 7.2:

Comparison of Teacher-Generated Enrollment Questionnaires

A comparison of the enrollment questionnaires of Ismael and Ignacio follows. These forms will be analyzed in terms of graphological and functional literacy, as well as the literacy of thoughtfulness.

Last Name _____
First Name ISMAEL
5-72-69-6209 Social Security Number
A32733198 Mica Number (= La Migra Number) 210 245
Address 22-12 DE LA VINA SANTA BARBARA
Phone Number 5-59-5671 Birthdate 6-19-60 Age 31
Birthplace MEXICO
____ Single ☒ Married _____ Separated _____ Divorced
How many children do you have? Two How old are they? 5 years and 4 months
1. How long have you lived in the United States? I have been here
2. Why did you come here? _____
3. Who do you live with? _____
4. Where do you work? I work for Toyota of SB
5. What is your job? I work for SERVICE DEPARTMENT
6. List three things you do at work. (If you don't work, what do you do at home?)
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
7. If you could get more education or training, what kind of a job would you like to have? _____
8. Education: Circle highest grade attended:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 University: 1 2 3 4 Subject: _____
9. Did you go to elementary school? NO Where? _____
Did you study English? Yes Now How long? _____
10. Did you go to secondary (high) school? NO Where? _____
Did you study English? Never How long? _____
11. Did you go to the university? NO Where? _____ Subject? _____
Did you study English? Never How long? _____
12. How long have you studied English in the United States? one week
Where? Santa Barbara Jr. hgt.
13. What do you like best about the United States?
I like the weather
14. What do you miss about your own country?
I miss my family
15. What are your favorite hobbies? What do you do in your free time?
I go out with my family

Last Name _____ Date 1-11-93
First Name J. Jarama
369-44 8900 Social Security Number
_____ Mica Number (= La Migra Number) 210 245
Address 1508 San Pascual
Phone Number 899-3576 Birthdate 12-27-64 Age 28
Birthplace: Town Ocotlán State Jalisco Country Mexico
☒ Single _____ Married _____ Separated _____ Divorced
How many children do you have? _____ How old are they? _____

1. How long have you lived in the United States? I have live in U.S.A for two years
2. Why did you come here? I come here for study English.
3. How many people do you live with? 3 Who are they? (wife, husband, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends) I live in an apartment with two bedroom in one I and my friend Yagaly, in other my friends Roberto Carlos
4. Who do you work for? I work for the hotel: Four Seasons Baltimore
5. What is your job? My work is houseman of the public area.
6. List three things you do at work. (If you don't work, what do you do at home?)
 - A. first one: check the bathroom in the lobby area
 - B. second one: be careful to keep clean my work area
 - C. third one: my boss make me work hard.
7. If you could get more education or training, what kind of a job would you like to have?
I will like to work for a graphic company.
8. Education: Circle highest grade attended:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 University: 1 2 3 4 Subject _____
9. Did you go to elementary school? yes Where? my little town
Did you study English? yes How long? we sang only a song
10. Did you go to secondary (high) school? yes Where? my little town
Did you study English? yes How long? for three years
11. Did you go to the university? yes Where? in Guadalajara Subject? Industrial design
Did you study English? no How long? _____
12. How long have you studied English in the United States? I studied English for one year and a half
Where? in this lobby school
13. What do you like best about the United States?
for every people the freedom for my self everything is in order
14. What do you miss about your own country? (miss = things you like about your country that aren't here)
first thing the food second: my own house and my personal thing.
15. What are your favorite hobbies? What do you do in your free time?
My favorite reading, swim, cook, and paint.

Escribe un breve párrafo en español contestando las siguientes preguntas. ---

¿Cuál era su trabajo antes de salir de su país? Si usted estuviera todavía allí, ¿qué trabajo estaría realizando ahora? ¿Cuál es su trabajo en los Estados Unidos? Explique lo que usted hace. Si tuviera la preparación necesaria, ¿qué trabajo le gustaría estar desempeñando? Respecto a ese trabajo, específicamente, ¿qué cree que estaría usted haciendo?

If you don't speak Spanish, answer the questions in a paragraph in English.

What was your job in your country before you left? If you were still there, what would you be doing now? What is your job in the United States? Explain what you do. If you could have more education or training, what job would you like to have? What specifically do you think you would be doing?

En mi país tenía varias ocupaciones estudiaba en la mañana inglés de 10 a 12 am dormía un rato comía y estudiaba cerámica de 17 a 21 pm terminando de mi clase me dirigía hacia mi trabajo de bell man en un hotel de lujo de Guadalupe y el día de descanso de el auditor nocturno cubría yo su lugar de trabajo.

Si continuara allá creo que seguiría estudiando creo que diseño grafico, trabajando en el hotel o en algun otro lado y tambien continuaria estudiando ingles.

Mis ocupaciones son ir a el hotel en turno matutino de 7 a 15.30 pm de ahí me voy a mi medio turno de 17 a 19 pm horas, posteriormente me dirijo a mi escuela de 19 a 21 horas.

Si pudiera continuar mis estudios continuaria estudiando diseño grafico ya obtuve aqui mi certificado de high school ahora me hace falta perfeccionar mi ingles y continuar estudiando algo siempre me gusta estudiar algo nuevo.

Específicamente me gustaria estar realizando algunas campañas publicitarias, dibujando algo o alguna tomando fotos de productos y estar enfocado en el ramo de publicidad y estar en un estudio vendiendo solo.

CONSENT TO RELEASE FORM: I hereby authorize my teacher, Monica Jones, to use any of my written work for her University of London Ph.D. research project.

Last Name

Jgnacio

First Name

Signature

Date

1-11-93

Differences in L2 graphological literacy competency are evident when one compares the English side of the enrollment questionnaires. Beginning with penmanship, Ismael's printing is labored, indicative of someone who writes very little and has had limited formal education. In contrast, Ignacio uses cursive, which has not been taught in Mexican public schools since 1972 and therefore indicates that he went to a private school which still taught cursive or learned it from his literate parents or a private tutor. The amount of formal education bears out this hypothesis: Ismael finished three years of school, whereas Ignacio completed twelve years of school and three years of university; he also studied English in high school.

A rereading of the two enrollment questionnaires for lexis, grammar and syntax reveals similar differences between the two students. Ismael's form is only partially complete. When he entered the class, Ismael could read and write very little English, if any. Another student was assigned to help him with spelling, but the choices of vocabulary, grammar and syntax are his own. A construction such as *I have been here* indicates his oral command of the English language. The change in handwriting indicates that when the form was not completed near the end of the hour, his helper started writing Ismael's answers for him.

In contrast Ignacio has written much more, apparently uninhibited by the prospect of making numerous errors. His spelling is quite good, although he makes occasional errors (*evething, fredom, scohol*), including cognates (*favorit, grafic*). He makes one lexical error when he says he sleeps in the bathroom, an error which Ismael would not have made. While Ignacio has a much higher level of L2 literacy than Ismael, Ignacio's grammatical and syntactical errors are as frequent as those he would make in speech and reflect a much weaker command of spoken English.

Ismael's Spanish portion of the form was analyzed in Chapter 1.5.3. It will be recalled that he wrote a series of run-on phrases with no punctuation and numerous spelling errors, all indicators of limited L1 literacy. In comparison, Ignacio writes a much longer composition in complete sentences. He makes no spelling errors and only occasionally forgets diacritical marks. Ignacio listed reading as hobby, which indicates that he sees a lot of language in print and therefore is familiar with literacy norms, such as writing in complete sentences with appropriate punctuation, paragraphing, and so on. Ismael says he spends his spare time going out with his family, which means that for him literacy activities are less important and also that he has less familiarity with the printed page. While it could be assumed that the students would have higher literacy in L1 than in L2, Ismael's Spanish essay reveals the limited level of his L1 literacy and how restricted the skills are that he can transfer to L2. On the other hand, Ignacio has much upon which to build.

Functional literacy was indicated by the student's ability to complete the questionnaire alone. This Ignacio could do, although his errors were so frequent that by NS American standards he would not be considered to be functionally literate. As Ismael could not complete the form alone, he was obviously not functionally literate.

The literacy of thoughtfulness was incorporated to a limited extent through open-ended questions, such as *If you could get more education and training, what would you like to do?* Such a question may not seem particularly interesting or difficult for an educated individual from a highly technological society but many of the ESL students have difficulty in thinking in such a way. Even if students are told that a hypothetical person would fund further education, they often have difficulty imagining any such possibilities. Ismael did not answer this question the first term, but subsequently he said that he wanted to be an (automotive) technician, a realistic goal which would involve more literacy. Ignacio had studied accounting for three years at the university, but wanted to learn something completely different, namely graphic design.

Other questions were devised to help develop a greater understanding of the student's literacy needs and uses. To start with occupations, it was hypothesized earlier that current employment reveals little about the students' ESL literacy to an outsider. But to one knowledgeable about the community, the specific jobs listed give some indication of the students' L2 oral communicative competence and socio-economic background. Ismael's job at an established, reputable new car dealership indicates that in spite of limited L2 literacy, his oral communicative ability and his vocational skills are sufficient for rather good employment. However, judging from his L2 literacy level, Ismael's job must involve little reading or writing. Ignacio's job as a house boy requires virtually no L2 literacy and only limited L2 oral communicative competence. However, the hotel, one of the most expensive in the community, has an unofficial policy of hiring educated Mexicans of a socio-economic class similar to that of the clientele. Thus the fact that Ignacio works there is a probable indicator of considerable formal education and commensurate L1 literacy.

Family (or living group) literacy can be another component of a literacy profile. The composition of the student's household can indicate which language is predominantly used and the extent of need for L2 literacy a student has. As Ismael lives with his Mexican wife and two pre-school children, Spanish is probably the primary language used at home, at least until the children go to school, where they will learn English. Presently paying rent and utility bills written in English is the primary task the parents must do in English, although with time the children may need help with homework in English. Ignacio lives with friends, also young Mexican males. The primary L2 literacy activity for these individuals is again paying bills in English.

Reasons for immigration can also provide clues as to a student's motivation for learning English and attaining L2 literacy, which usually center around employment and citizenship. First of all, if an individual comes to the United States for economic reasons — what Ismael phrased as 'seeking a better life' — entry-level employment is possible with minimal oral communicative competence and no L2 literacy, but job advancement is ultimately tied to attaining L2 literacy. Ismael can only rise from being the car dealership's errand boy in the service department to writing orders or becoming a technician if he attains L2 literacy. Second, although most Mexicans do not come with the intention of staying,

even if they qualify for amnesty as Ismael did, they must acquire minimal literacy in English in order to pass the federal test to qualify for amnesty. Thus the economic motivation for immigration as well as the later citizenship requirements both influence many students desire to learn English.

The motivating factors are slightly different with the more educated Mexicans who also tend to come from the middle and upper classes. Most of these individuals can find employment in Mexico and are therefore not immigrating out of the need to make money to support their families at home. Usually the more literate Mexicans come to the United States in order to learn English and learn about another culture, as might Europeans coming to the United States for a visit. However, all of the more literate Mexicans were working at entry-level jobs, for their families could not afford just to have them vacation in the United States for an extended period. While these more educated Mexicans were not economic refugees, most thought that proficiency in English would help them when after a couple of years in the United States they returned to Mexico. The first time Ignacio answered the question 'Why did you come here?' he wrote *illegal*. The next term he understood the question and said that he had come in order to learn English, for he felt this would be advantageous for employment purposes when he returned home, which he did do after two years.

The Spanish essays provided additional self-reported information, which supported conclusions drawn from the English portion of the form. As was already discussed (Chapter 1.5.3), Ismael had to leave school to help with the farm work, and he thought if he went home he might be still doing the same thing. His L1 literacy was limited, for he wrote in one run-on sentence and made errors in spelling, grammar, and syntax.

Ignacio came from a much more educated and wealthier family. At one period he studied English in the morning and ceramics in the afternoon. While he did work for a time as a bellhop in Mexico, it was at a fashionable hotel and the motivation (as with others of this socioeconomic class) may have been further employment in hotel/restaurant management. If Ignacio went home, he would probably either go into hotel/restaurant management or study graphic design. Although he had studied accounting for three years, he told me after completing the form that he never wanted to be an accountant.

This comparison of Ismael and Ignacio on the basis of their enrollment questionnaires shows how a carefully constructed form can provide considerable literacy information about a new student. These forms enabled the teacher/researcher to develop some understanding of each student's L1 and L2 literacy, as well as of his background. Furthermore, enrollment questionnaires not only provide valuable information upon intake, but since at the beginning of each term (of about ten weeks) each student must complete the enrollment questionnaire, these provide a good means of monitoring progress.

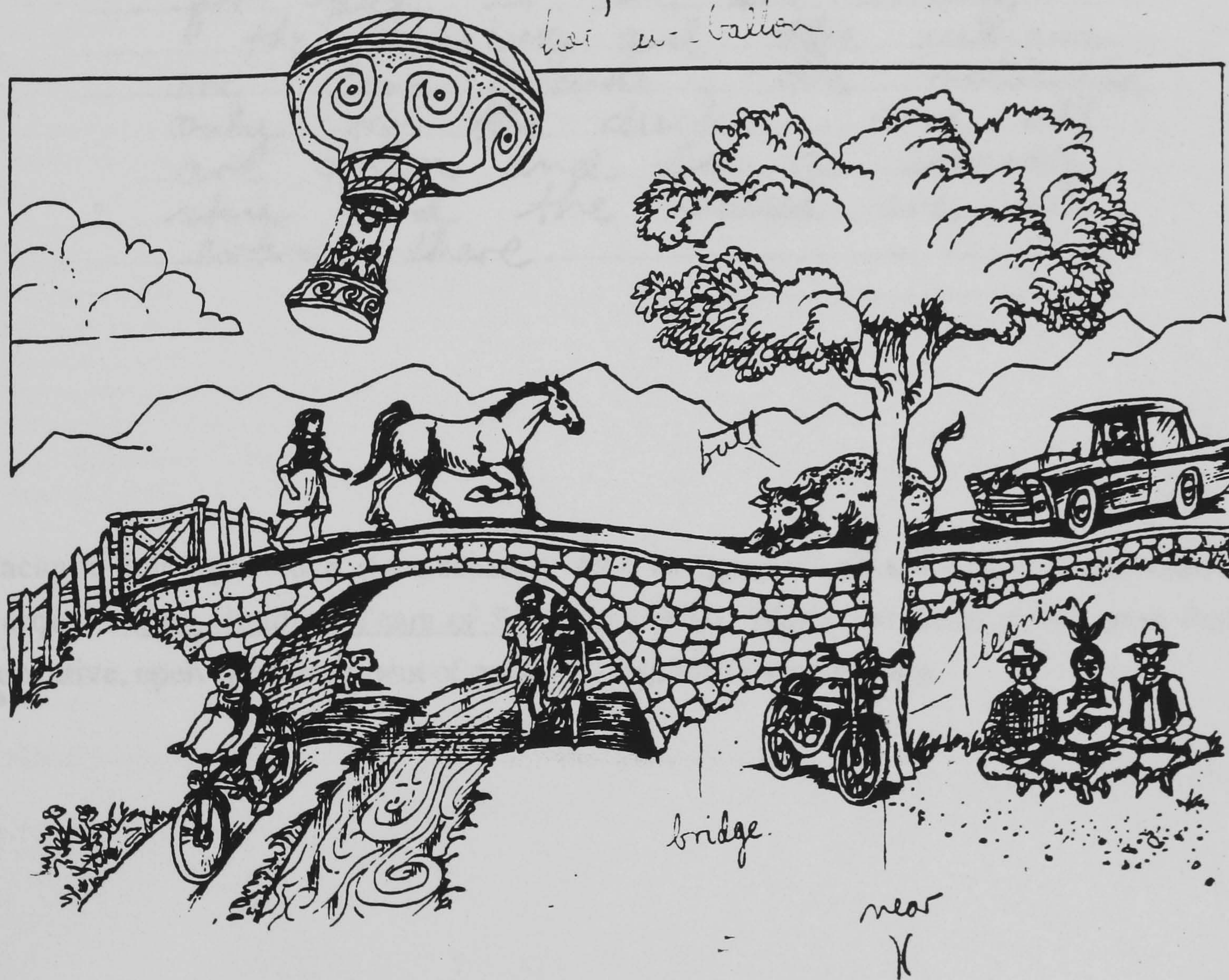
Appendix 7.3:

Ignacio's Creative Writing Take-off on Grammar Lesson

Occasional mini-lessons on grammar were appropriate particularly when a number of students consistently made the same kind of error. For example, a workbook page from Writing Practical English #2 (1983: 43) was utilized as a lesson-base to review prepositions. Following the procedure similar to that used in other literacy lessons, the class first did the page orally. As students spoke, their additional vocabulary was written and projected on the overhead projector. The oral part of the lesson was expanded in that students were encouraged to create as many sentences as possible for each pair of nouns on the sheet. Then the students were asked to fill in the page. Finally they were asked to write a story about the picture, rather than just a factual description of the illustration.

NAME _____

DATE _____



- i Ask and answer questions about the picture using these prepositions: *in, on, next to, in front of, behind, under, between.*

Ignacio's story reads as follows.

Once upon a time one sunny day the boy in front of my house went to the Macando lane and he take this stranger picture. he show me this in the afternoon. and only in this place the horse and the bull are relatives of the dog. the car doesn't work is only for put it on the bridge. the cowboy and the indians are close friends. the motorcycle only for the dicks. and all are green and has a clear sky and the places are in every where.

Macando Lane provided the necessary clue to Ignacio's take-off on Gabriel García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude (1970). While not all students were that innovative, open encouragement of creativity resulted in such writing.

Appendix 7.4: Dating and Marriage

Dating and Marriage

Name Norberto
Date 1-1-93

Most people fall in love and get married. But how do you decide who to marry? How important to you think these qualities are in the person you marry?

Very	VERY Somewhat important	SOMEWHAT Not important	NOT important
The person is good looking.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X The person is intelligent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person has a good sense of humor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person is honest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person is outgoing.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person works hard.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person has a good job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person wants to get a better job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person is rich.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person has the same religion as you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person comes from the same country as you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
X The person speaks good English.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X The person can read and write English.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person wants to learn more English.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person can speak your native language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person can read and write your native language.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person doesn't smoke cigarettes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person doesn't take drugs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person doesn't drink alcohol.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person wants to have children.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person will help with the housework.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person likes sports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The person likes dancing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The person likes reading books.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
+ Your mother likes the person.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X Your father likes the person.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your best friend likes the person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other ideas you want to add:			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which 5 things are most important for your partner? Put an X in front of those.

Now write a story about the person you want to marry. If you are married, write about your husband or wife.

Appendix 7.5: 'What Are You Really Like?' Questionnaire

Name ISMAEL Date 2.8.93

What are you really like?

It is interesting to think about that ideal or perfect person you want to marry. But most people are not perfect. Most people don't change that much after they get married. If you and the person you want to marry are honest, you would tell each other what you are really like. Here are some questions to help you think about what you are really like. Try to be honest and answer all the questions. If you think something is too personal, you don't have to answer.

1. Do this questionnaire.
 Very>>>>>>Somewhat>>>>>>not very>>>>>>not
 Always>>>>>>usually>>>>>>often>>>>>>sometimes>>>>>>rarely>>>>>>never
2. Mark your 3 greatest strengths (S) and 3 greatest weaknesses (W).
3. Write a story about yourself and be sure you tell about these things.

My Character

1. Are you cheerful? >>>>>> grouchy?
2. Are you outgoing? >>>>>> reserved?
3. Do you have a sense of humor? >>>>>> are you serious?
4. Are you always honest? >>>>>> dishonest?
5. Are you calm? >>>>>> do you get excited?
6. Do you get angry easily? >>>>>> Does it take a lot to get you angry?
7. Do you shout and yell when you are angry? >>>>>> Are you quiet when you are angry?
8. Do you rush to get things done? >>>>>> do you allow enough time to get things done?
9. Are you intelligent? >>>>>> not very intelligent?
10. Do you like to get up early and go to bed early? >>>>>> get up late and go to bed late?
11. Are you active? >>>>>> sedentary?
12. In your free time do you like to read? Watch TV? Listen to the radio? Do sports (which ones)?
13. Should you both have the same friends? always >>>>>> never
Is it OK if you just go out with your friends? (same sex yes) opposite sex _____
Is it OK if your spouse just goes out with his/her friends? (same sex _____ opposite sex _____)
14. Do you think it is OK to take alcohol (you _____ spouse A/B) Drugs (you A/B spouse _____)
smoke cigarettes (you A/B spouse A/B)
15. How long do you think you will stay in the US? 1 year _____ 2-5 years _____ 6-10 years _____ always
16. Are you an optimist _____ → pessimist?

Education and politics

- + 1. Do you want to get more education? >>>>>>>>>>>Do you know enough already?
+ 2. Would you help your spouse if he/she wanted more education? >>>>>>>Education isn't that important for my spouse.
- + 2. Do you want to learn more English? >>>>>>>>>>>Do you know enough already?
4. Would you want your spouse to learn more English? >>>>>>>It wouldn't be important for him/her.
5. If there were classes 4 nights a week and one of you had to say home
Should you go 4 nights? _____ Should your spouse go 4 nights? ____
Should you each go 2 nights? X/____ Should you stay home together? _____
6. It is important that you agree on politics? always>>>>>>>never

Money

1. Do you spend all the money you earn? >>>>>>>> Do you save some?
2. If you save money for something, what do you save for?
3. Do you send money home to your family? Yes How much?
If you get married, should you both send the same amount of money home? _____
If you can't send that much, who should send less? Me _____ Spouse Yes Both _____
4. Who should take care of family finances? Me _____ Spouse _____ Both Yes
5. Is it important to earn as much money as possible? >>>>earn some money but spend time together?

Household

- † 1. Who should do the housework? Me _____ Spouse _____ Both YES
2. Are you neat? >>>> 3 >>>> messy?

Children, family, and sex

1. How many children did your parents have? 5 How many children do you want to have? 2
2. Do you think it is OK to use birth control? Yes

Who should use birth control? Both

4. Would I be faithful to my spouse? _____ Should my spouse be faithful yes Should be both be faithful? _____
5. Who should take care of the children? Me _____ Spouse _____ Both yes
6. Who should discipline the children? Me _____ Spouse _____ Both yes
5. Is it important to get along with your parents yes spouse's parents _____

Religion

1. Do you go to your place of worship (church, synagogue, mosque) every day? _____ How many times week? _____ How many times a month? _____ How many times a year? _____ Never ALL
2. What is your religion? _____ Is it important that your spouse has the same one? _____
3. If you have different religions, should your children have your religion _____ your spouse's _____ children can choose yes

Other things

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Appendix 7.6: Literacy Uses Questionnaire

Name Josue
Date February 22, 93

Reading and Writing

Most people say it is important to learn how to read and write English if you live in the United States. Today we are going to think about what each one of us really does read and write. Answer these questions. Be honest. This will help you to think about what you need to learn and it will help your teacher too.

What do you READ at work every week?	How often?	Language?
1. Handwritten notes from your boss or coworkers Does he write cursive? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does he print? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>Daily</u> 3-4 days 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
2. Printed information for everyone on bulletin boards	<u>Daily</u> 3-4 days 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
3. Printed information on the things you use (directions on bottles, cans, parts)	<u>Daily</u> 3-4 days 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
What do you READ for your household every week?		
4. Price tags and information on things you buy?	<u>Daily</u> 3-4 days 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
5. Bills you get in the mail?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
6. Advertisements you get in the mail?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
7. Notes from people you live with?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
8. Cook books	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
9. Phone book	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u>
What do you READ for fun every week?		
9. Letters from friends or family?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
10. The newspaper?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
Which ones?	<u>San Francisco Chronicle, LA Times, Local, Inquisitor</u>	
11. Magazines?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
Which ones?	<u>G & Q, Selections of L.O., T.V. Guide, Santa Barbara</u>	
11. TV guide	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
12. Comic books	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days <u>Never</u>	<u>English</u> or Spanish
13. Books	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
If you read books, what is the last book you read or the book you are reading now? <u>San Manuel Puro</u>		
What book do you think your teacher should read about your country? <u>Public Anecdotal</u>		
<u>Amey one at 10:00-11:00 AM, Juan Jose Morales or Carlos Jimenez or Manuel Ruiz, La Traci</u>		
What do you WRITE at work every week?		
1. Notes to your boss or other workers	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
2. Phone messages for other people	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
3. Notes to yourself	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
What do you WRITE for your household every week?		
4. Notes to other people you live with	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
5. Notes to yourself	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
6. Checks	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
What do you WRITE for fun?		
7. Letters to friends or family?	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days Never	<u>English</u> or Spanish
8. A diary	<u>Daily</u> <u>3-4 days</u> 1-2 days <u>Never</u>	<u>English</u> or Spanish
9. Other?	<u>homework</u>	

Who do you think was the smartest person you knew when you were growing up? Dad and Ma.
What was his or her job? Dad was a Doctor, Ma was a housewife.
Could he or she read and write? yes

How did the person learn what he or she knew? I knew to be confident, don't tell lies, be a good worker; they trust in me and I trust in them, they show me the good way and the bad way and they give to me and each member of the family the freedom

Appendix 7.7: 1992 US Presidential Election Questionnaire

Name _____
Date _____

The Presidential Election

Every four years on the first Tuesday in November the citizens of the United States vote for a new President. This year there are three candidates. Read and think about what the candidates want to do. Republicans say Bush was Vice President for 8 years and President for 4 years. Some people say he has experience. Democrats and independents say Bush is responsible for the problems in America today and we need a change. Clinton has been Governor of Arkansas for 12 years. He was elected the best governor by the governors of all fifty states, because Arkansas is a poor state, but Clinton has improved education and more people have jobs there. Independents say politicians made the problems we have, so we should have someone new, a business man, solve our problems. After we talk about each issue, write down who you think has the best ideas. In the Me column, write B = Bush, C = Clinton, and P = Perot. Then decide who you would vote for!

Issue	Me	Republicans George Bush (63: President) Dan Quayle (44: Vice Pres.)	Democrats Bill Clinton (46: Governor) Al Gore (44: Senator)	Independents Ross Perot (63: Business) James Stockdale(68: General)
The Economy	----	Getting better	Major problem	Major problem
Reduce National Debt (14% of budget)	___	For	For: problem	For: major problem
Defense (27% of budget)	___	Cut 3% over 5 years	Cut 33% over 5 years	
US soldiers stationed abroad	___	For	Against	Against
Military aid to El Salvador	___	For	Against	Against
Nuclear test ban	---	Against	For	Against
Education (4% of budget)				
More money for little children (Head Start)	___	Against	For	?
Improve public schools	___	For	For: major problem	For: major problem
Job training and retraining	___	For	For: major problem	For
School vouchers (\$1000 per student to spend on any school - public, private, religious)	___	For	Against	Against
Environment				
New cars must get 45 miles per gallon	___	Against	For	?
Use recycled materials in new things	___	Against	For	For
Health Care				
Medical insurance for everyone	___	Against	For	?
12 week unpaid vacation if someone in family is sick you have a new baby	___	Against	For	?
Housing				
More money to build affordable housing	___	Against	For	?
Jobs				
North American Free Trade Agreement	___	For	Against	Against
Make more jobs for Americans	___	For	For: major problem	For: major problem
Women's Issues				
Constitutional amendment for equal rights for women	___	Against	For	?
Freedom of Choice (legal abortion)	___	Against	For	For
Taxes				
More taxes for the rich	___	Against	For	For
Lower taxes for middle class	---	Against	For	For
Taxes on US companies abroad (like maquiladoras)	___	Against	For	For

I would vote for _____

Appendix 7.8: Ismael's Thank You Letter

27-17 DE LA VINA

Santa Barbara CA 93105

March 20, 1993

Ms. Annatta Corral and Ms. Peggy Hayes
20-10 Garden Street
Santa Barbara CA 93105

Dear Ms. Corral and Ms. Hayes.

Thank you very much

for explaining the laws.

It was very interesting

I learn many interesting things.

I learned the jury

doesn't always agree.

Sincerely yours

Ismael

Appendix 7.9: Student Class Evaluation Questionnaire

Name Ismael
Date 4.3.92

LEARNING ENGLISH

People learn languages in different ways. Think about how you learn the best and what you want to learn most when you answer the following questions:

	No	A little	Good	Best	
1. I like to learn English by reading			X		
2. I like to learn English by writing.		X			
3. I like to learn English by listening.				X	
4. I like to learn English by speaking.			X		
5. How do you learn English best?					
Working with the whole class			X		
Working in small group			X		
Working in pairs		X			
Working alone in class	NA				
Studying at home alone				X	
6. What kind of things do you like in class?					
Verb tests		X			
Look Again Pictures			X		
Look at the US Book				X	
Work Sheets		X			
Writing stories				X	
Learning new words			X		
Learning grammar			X		
Learning pronunciation		X			
Writing letters		X			
Spelling			X		
Class discussion		X			
7. When people speak English with you, how much do you understand?	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Your teacher			X		
Your boss at work		X			
Anglos you work with		X			
People in stores			X		
People on the telephone			X		
Medical people		X			
People on TV		X			
People on radio		X			
8. When you read English, how much do you understand?					
Pay checks		X			
Utility bills		X			
Employment forms		X			
Things to read at work (signs, work orders)		X			
Newspaper advertisements for jobs		X			
Yellow pages of phone book		X			
Children's report cards		X			
Newspaper articles		X			

9. What are the most important things you want to learn now?

I well like to learn how to speak Better
I well like how to written

Name J. Ignacio
 Date November 30, 92

LEARNING ENGLISH

People learn languages in different ways. Think about how you learn the best and what you want to learn most when you answer the following questions:

	No	A little	Good	Best	
1. I like to learn English by reading			X		
2. I like to learn English by writing.			X		
3. I like to learn English by listening.				X	
4. I like to learn English by speaking.				X	
5. How do you learn English best?					
Working with the whole class			X		
Working in small group				X if everybody work	
Working in pairs			X		
Working alone in class			X		
Studying at home alone		X			
6. What kind of things do you like in class?					
Verb tests				X	
Look Again Pictures			X		
Look at the US Book			X		
Work Sheets				X	
Writing stories				X	
Learning new words			X		
Learning grammar			X		
Learning pronunciation				X	
Writing letters				X	
Spelling				X	
Class discussion				X	
The Pirates of Penzance				X	
7. When people speak English with you, how much do you understand?	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Your teacher					X
Your boss at work					X
Anglos you work with				X	
People in stores				X	
People on the telephone				X	
Medical people					
People on TV				X	
People on radio				X	
8. When you read English, how much do you understand?					
Pay checks					X no.
Utility bills					X
Employment forms					X
Things to read at work (signs, work orders)					X
Newspaper advertisements for jobs				X	
Yellow pages of phone book					X
Children's report cards					
Newspaper articles				X	

9. What are the most important things you want to learn in this class after Christmas?

I think you speak a good level of English and this we can speak with people of good level but, in California or I don't know! the people or in the work speak other level I don't know if this is bad or good but sometimes ask me in "slang" and I'm not so smart

10. What did you like best about this class?

of course the teacher Monica, the class notes the room, the sky the clock, my pencil your smile and the best I learn English!

11. What is the most important thing you learned in this class that you think you will remember in 5 years? Something about how you learn English? Something about schools in America? Something about teachers in America?

- 1- of course the English, the pronunciation
- 2- the freedom in class, don't press anyone to learn
- 3- are free, the way to teach for the teachers
- 4- about Monica: everything she is lovely
about Virginia: her patience

Appendix 7.10: TOEFL TWE Scoring Guide

(Educational Testing Service 1992: 23)

APPENDIX B

TEST OF WRITTEN ENGLISH (TWE) SCORING GUIDE

Revised 2/90

Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide. Though examinees are asked to write on a specific topic, parts of the topic may be treated by implication. Readers should focus on what the examinee does well.

Scores

- 6** **Demonstrates clear competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it may have occasional errors.**
A paper in this category
—effectively addresses the writing task
—is well organized and well developed
—uses clearly appropriate details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas
—displays consistent facility in the use of language
—demonstrates syntactic variety and appropriate word choice
- 5** **Demonstrates competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels, though it will probably have occasional errors.**
A paper in this category
—may address some parts of the task more effectively than others
—is generally well organized and developed
—uses details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea
—displays facility in the use of language
—demonstrates some syntactic variety and range of vocabulary
- 4** **Demonstrates minimal competence in writing on both the rhetorical and syntactic levels.**
A paper in this category
—addresses the writing topic adequately but may slight parts of the task
—is adequately organized and developed
—uses some details to support a thesis or illustrate an idea
—demonstrates adequate but possibly inconsistent facility with syntax and usage
—may contain some errors that occasionally obscure meaning
- 3** **Demonstrates some developing competence in writing, but it remains flawed on either the rhetorical or syntactic level, or both.**
A paper in this category may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:
—inadequate organization or development
—inappropriate or insufficient details to support or illustrate generalizations
—a noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms
—an accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage
- 2** **Suggests incompetence in writing.**
A paper in this category is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:
—serious disorganization or underdevelopment
—little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics
—serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage
—serious problems with focus
- 1** **Demonstrates incompetence in writing.**
A paper in this category
—may be incoherent
—may be undeveloped
—may contain severe and persistent writing errors

Papers that reject the assignment or fail to address the question must be given to the Table Leader. Papers that exhibit absolutely no response at all must also be given to the Table Leader.



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23

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